

RUNES

AND THEIR ORIGIN

Denmark and Elsewhere

ERIK MOLTKE

The National Museum of Denmark

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The National Museum of Denmark

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To Architect Elna Møller
my wife, my adviser
my fellow worker

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SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

- * before an inscription: illustration
- † before an inscription: disappeared
- () enclosing runes or points: unsure
- [] enclosing runes or points: reconstruction
- < > secondary or superfluous
- | change of lines
- || change of sides or side A, side B etc.
- å /:ǿ/ (= West Norse ǫ)

Most of the abbreviations are general and as a rule quite transparent (T = Tidsskrift (periodical), Z = Zeitschrift).

ON = Old Norse (i.e. Old Scandinavian, but most often specifically Old Icelandic)

PN = Primitive Norse (vowel length not indicated)

DaRun: Danmarks runeindskrifter. Ved Lis Jacobsen og Erik Moltke under medvirken af Anders Bæksted og Karl Martin Nielsen. København 1942.

Fritzner: Johan Fritzner. Ordbog over Det gamle norske Sprog. Kristiania 1886-1896.

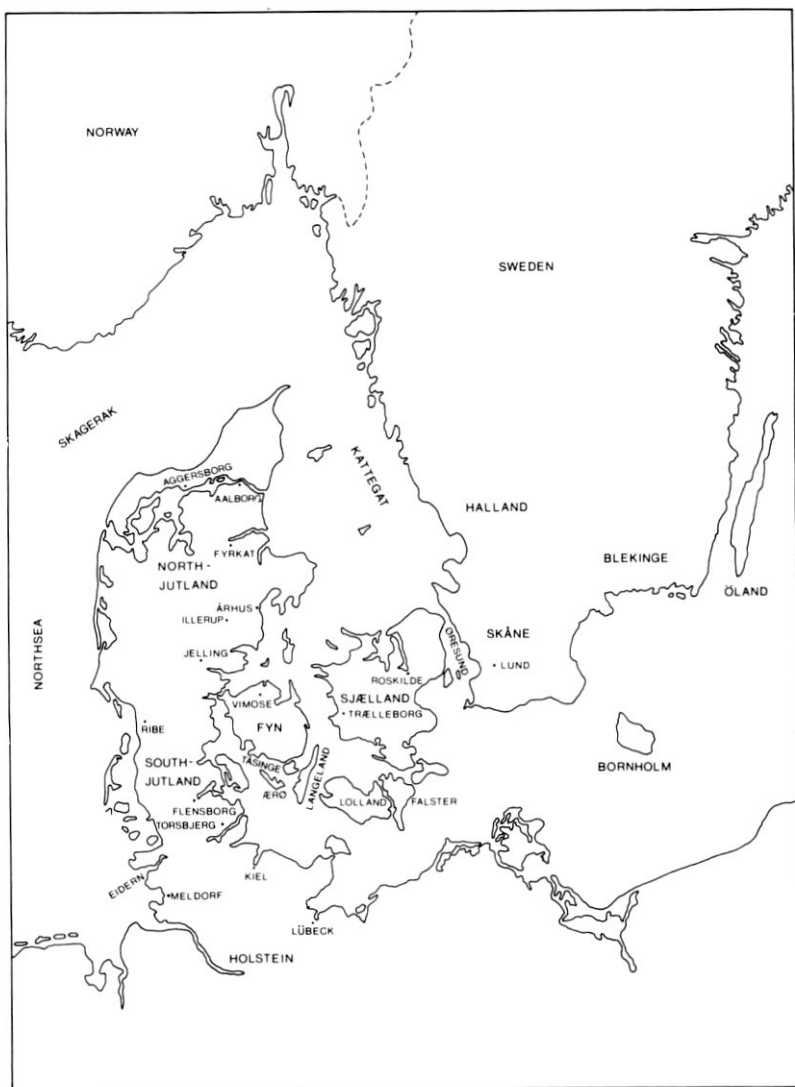
Krause: Wolfgang Krause. Die Runeninschriften im älteren Futhark. Mit Beiträgen von Herbert Jankuhn. Göttingen 1966.

NoIyR: Norges innskrifter med de yngre runer. Ved Magnus Olsen og Aslak Liestøl. Oslo 1941-.

NoIæR: Norges Indskrifter med de ældre Runer. Ved Sophus Bugge og Magnus Olsen. Christiania 1891-1924.

Wimmer, DRM: Ludvig F. A. Wimmer. De danske runemindesmærker I-IV. København 1893-1908.

ÅrbOldk(ynd).: Aarbøger for nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie. 1866-.



Denmark during the Viking Age and the Middle ages, including the most important place-names.

Foreword

Runes and their origin, Denmark and Elsewhere contains all the runic inscriptions known from the ancient realm of the Danes – that “greater” Denmark which included what are now the Swedish provinces of Skåne, Blekinge and Halland, and a Jutland which extended as far south as the Eider, the river which then separated Danes and Saxons, though now the southern half of South Jutland, roughly from Flensburg southward, is part of Germany. In addition, there are the Danish inscriptions from the Viking settlements in the British Isles. – A good many non-Danish inscriptions are also considered and new interpretations of them often proposed.

For most of Period 1 – from the birth of Christ to about AD 700 – writing, language and culture generally were the same, or very closely similar, throughout all the parts of Europe under Germanic rule. The author naturally introduces a reader to the common features, and the common problems, that relate to this large area, but it is not only in discussing the first rune period that he brings in “foreign” inscriptions. From later times too he adduces much external runic evidence to elucidate linguistic and cultural developments – including aspects of alphabet history – and the result is a better understanding of both the native and the foreign. The work is thus far from being a confined study of purely “Danish” inscriptions – and that accounts for the word “elsewhere” in the title.

The book begins with an account of the origin of runes. This is firmly based on principles of *alphabet history* – and if that is a murky subject to most philologists, they have only their own shortsightedness to blame. Did the runic alphabet have one mother or several? And was she, or were they, Phoenician, Greek, Etruscan or Roman?

The three great rune periods are then described: the Primitive Norse (or “Common Germanic”) period, with its polysyllabic personal names – Hlewagastir, Hagiradar; then the Viking Age,

with its struggle between Thor and White Christ, its death and destruction, kings and queens, ancestral pride and lavish hospitality; and finally the medieval period, with its inscriptions on gravestones, churches and church furnishings. Throughout, the inscriptions are allowed to tell their own tale about the language, script and way of life of each period.

Runes and their origin, Denmark and Elsewhere is meant for everyone, specialist or general reader alike, with interests in language and the development of writing, in archaeology, political and social history, art, poetry, and magic both white and black. The runologist is concerned with all these subjects. He unlocks a treasure house of knowledge about ancient Denmark and the Viking world, where the English and American reader will also find unique and vivid gleams to illumine his own past.

It has been my aim to be both scholarly and popular, and the translator has taken pains to match the direct and easy style of the original. I have avoided the “scientific” jargon which has become all too common in academic writing nowadays.

It may be helpful to specialist readers if I observe at the outset that I work with only *three* runic periods (those mentioned above). This is because I regard it as axiomatic – as any right-minded person should – that a periodisation of the inscriptions must be based on purely runological considerations. The classification thus differs from that of the great corpus of Danish inscriptions published in 1942, in which four periods were distinguished. But the third period there – the early middle ages – is defined by reference to factors such as the nature of an inscription’s content or of the ornament associated with it or of the milieu in which it occurs – criteria that are essentially extraneous to the runic inscriptions themselves.

Runology is full of problems and many remain unsolved in this book. They are not ignored however – attention is drawn to them whenever possible and suggestions, some more tentative, some less so, are offered toward their solution, along with a number of new interpretations and viewpoints. It has been a serious point of principle with me to show readers what uncertainties and difficulties exist, and I have not tried to ram my own, or anybody else’s, ready-made remedy down their throats. One piece of advice may be worth offering to anyone who is interested enough to go out

into the countryside to check a reading or to see whether they really are runes and not natural fissures and furrows on this or that stone – and that is that you will not get reliable results if you peer at it in any old light – what you need is a good light *from the side*. If it is a stone you are inspecting, get close to it with your raincoat over your head, then lift the coat a little on one side and you will get an excellent oblique light. It was with the help of a big black skirt of the kind they wear in Valdres in Norway that I got a new and improved reading of that district's famous Einang inscription, which has proved a headache to so many runologists. Another thing worth remembering is that photographs – especially if taken in the wrong light – have been known to lie. Do not automatically rely on pictures of runes produced by any and every museum photographer – however good at his job otherwise – unless you are sure he knows about runes as well as cameras.

The problems which runologists have created for themselves – scholars are blessed with common sense only in varying degrees – are given a friendly nod from time to time. Numerological magic, which was all the rage in the '30s and '40s, still flourishes in certain countries. There is magic in runic inscriptions but it is not of that kind – indeed, as a rule it has nothing to do with the fact that the message is in runes at all. In period 1, after all, runes were the only kind of writing Germanic people had!

The photographs of rune stones reproduced in the book were all taken by the author, and most of the photographs of objects were also taken under his supervision. As indicated above – though not every runologist is in on the secret – an authentic picture of an inscription needs a good rune-man as much as a good camera-man.

The size of each object is noted in the caption accompanying its picture.

Thora Fisker has made an invaluable contribution and provided a special treat for the archaeologist, art historian and historian of religion with her line-drawings of all the “runic pictures”, including the ornament and symbols, associated with inscriptions in one way or another.

The captions either give a generous *précis* of what the main text says or offer an independent note on the inscription and object in question. By simply moving from picture to picture and caption

to caption a reader will get a good grasp of the book's contents and the ideas and experience embodied in it.

The bibliography is severely selective. The works cited are chiefly recent publications, particularly such as themselves give ample bibliographical information. On the other hand, the notes to the different sections contain plenty of references.

A subject-index guides the reader to discussion of selected topics of interest. There is no index of people and places.

Since the inscriptions can in no way be said to reproduce the speech of their time but are expressed in a *traditional written language* (a language which from about AD 1 to AD 500 *appears* not to have changed at all!), I have rarely "transcribed" or "rendered" them in a "normalised" Old Norse – not least because this conventional Old Norse is also a written language miles away from the actual pronunciation of early periods.

It only remains to add that between the publication of the 1942 corpus – which has long been out of print and is now in many respects out of date as well – and the publication of the first edition of this book in 1976 some 75 inscriptions came to light, and that further over 90 inscriptions have been discovered since 1976. All these new inscriptions will be found here.

I must thank the Danish Research Council for the Humanities for a subvention which allowed me to secure the services of Professor Peter Foote of University College London as a translator, after Professor Claiborne W. Thompson, who drafted an English version of the first sixty pages, found himself unable to undertake the whole work. Peter Foote quickly caught my tone of voice and its varieties and he has taken a lively interest in his task, occasionally recasting or adding a comment of his own, always to the book's advantage. He has been something more than a translator. The present English version has further benefited from a critical reading by Professor Michael Barnes, also of University College London, and from the good advice of Dr Sue Margeson of the Castle Museum, Norwich.

In the same way the book has benefited from a fruitful proof-reading by Marie Stoklund, my successor as leader of the National Museum's Runological and Epigraphical Laboratory. We have together inspected the most recent runological discoveries, and the

readings of the difficult plaster inscriptions in Skåne result from our combined efforts. Finally the book has greatly profited from a thorough reading in proof by the runologist, James E. Knirk, of Oslo University.

My thanks are also due to the Augustinus Foundation and to the Velux Foundation of 1981, without whose generous aid the publication of this second, augmented edition in a universal language would not have been possible, and to the Carlsberg Foundation, for a generous contribution; furthermore to the Council of the Viking Society for Northern Research, London, for their interest and encouragement from the beginning. FORUM has kindly placed the “old” films at my disposition free of charge.

Last but not least, my gratitude goes to the Danish State Antiquary, Professor Olaf Olsen, who, after my efforts to find a British or American publisher had failed, took the initiative in recommending the volume to the Publishing Department of the National Museum and in ensuring support for its issue under their auspices.

Copenhagen in October 1984

Erik Moltke

Erik Moltke died just a few days after putting his name to the foreword – and in the sure and certain knowledge that the book would be published. He left a corrected second proof in page and a manuscript draft of all the indexes. That it is now possible to send the book to the printer so soon after his death is chiefly due to the untiring help of two of the scholars already mentioned by him above, Marie Stoklund and James E. Knirk.

Copenhagen in February 1985

Elna Møller



Part 1: Runic writing

Århus stone 5 (6 in DaRun, nr 68), North Jutland. 160 cm. Retouched. Jelling 2 is the only Danish stone that surpasses the beauty of this well-proportioned and carefully-planned monument, elegant in design and rune forms. It was raised by comrades in memory of Asser Saxe who died as “the greatest undastard [i.e. the most noble-minded] among men”. The language and ornament suggest it was made at the beginning of the eleventh century.

In spite of persistent attempts, Charlemagne — one of the world's outstanding organisers — never learned to write.

The Italian farmer explained that they had tried hard to teach him the alphabet when he was a soldier, but he couldn't tell one letter from another. It was much easier, he said, to shear sheep or rear cows.

(Heard on a television program.)

What are runes?

When and where were they created?

Who invented them?

Whoever answers this question — and gets it right — has solved the riddle of the runes. The solution is no doubt lurking among the countless suggestions already proposed: some dry and pedestrian, others imaginative, fantastical, wild, crazy. All of them, of course, supported by extremely acute argument.

Specialists and non-specialists, learned men and laymen alike, have heeded the call to solve the mystery of the runes, and it would be hard to find a subject that has provoked so many different theories. What might compete? Perhaps the famous golden horn of Gallehus with its mysterious pictures 81 and its (apparently?) simple inscription. “I Hlewagastir, son of Holt, made the horn”? Perhaps the “riddle of the Etruscans”, where the innumerable “solutions” have driven more serious scholars to despair? Or perhaps — to cite an example from the New World — the notorious Kensington stone in Minnesota?

Some have thought that the runes were as old as the Flood, while others are content to assign them to the Bronze Age (c. 1500 BC), making them the ancestor of the oldest Mediterranean alphabets (Phoenician, Greek, Etruscan, etc.). Others again are modest enough to date them merely to the period around and following AD 800 [1]. And it cannot be said that the runologists (and “runologists”) of today have quite managed to agree on a specific date for the origin of runes (the Bronze Age crops up again and again), although opinion is beginning to converge on the period around the birth of Christ.

Nor is there much agreement on where the runes were created, nor on the constituents of the runic alphabet — the individual runes, their forms and meanings — not to mention some violent disagreement on the models they followed.

On one point, however, all are agreed: the runes are the oldest writing system of the Germanic peoples, the alphabet they used until Latin letters (our familiar, everyday alphabet) supplanted it. (On the word “rune”, see below.)

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The oldest objects with runes (tools, weapons, jewelry) come from the first centuries *after* the birth of Christ. If we assume that one or two centuries of (as yet undiscovered) inscriptions precede these finds, our searchlight falls on the period around the start of our era. Barring the discovery of further evidence, then, the year 0 ± 100 seems to be the most reasonable time for the birth of the runes. We shall return to this important question later, when we consider WHO saw the futhark (as the runic alphabet is called) into the world. The find of the Meldorf fibula, which the archaeologists date to about AD 50, will certainly lead to a new flare-up of this discussion.

The three runic periods and their alphabets

There have been three runic periods, each with its variant of the futhark. The *first period* covers the years from the birth of Christ until AD 600–700, i.e. the late Roman and the Germanic Iron Ages, to use the archaeologist's terminology. Runologists call this period (somewhat imprecisely) the Migration Age. The *second period*, c. AD 650–1025/50, is normally called the Viking Age (though usually confined by historians to c. 800–1000), and the *third period* is the Middle Ages, c. 1050–1400. Runes also appear after this period but they were no longer a living tradition: Latin has conquered and the old characters have become mere curiosities.

In the first part of Period 1, the archaeologist's late Roman Iron Age (ending c. AD 400), the influence of the Roman Empire on the Germanic tribes increased enormously as a result of trade connections, both directly and by way of the Roman provinces (the Rhineland, England). This influence, clearly attested by archaeological finds, was not diminished in the last part of the period, when the great Germanic migrations crushed the Roman Empire of the west.

THE 24-CHARACTER FUTHARK

The first and oldest runic alphabet we know consists of 24 characters, and the name "futhark" comes from its first six

runes. (The sequence of letters in this alphabet is most peculiar and unique.) Inscribed examples of the futhark – more or less complete – have been found in Scandinavia, France (Burgundy) and the Balkan region (Yugoslavia, Rumania).

The oldest futhark inscription was discovered in a grave from about AD 400, at Kylver on the Swedish island of Gotland. As far as we can tell, it was carved on the *inner* side of one of the flat stone slabs of the cist: in any event, the runes were hidden in the ground. Only the first rune ʀ was damaged. 25

Another important futhark of the 24-character type, probably about a hundred years younger than the Kylver alphabet, appears on a gold bracteate found at Vadstena, also in Sweden. It is roughly contemporary with another Swedish alphabet-bracteate found at Grumpan [2]. We shall hear more about bracteates later on, these thin gold medallion-like discs. Decorated with pictures and designs and furnished with an eyelet or loop for wearing round the neck, these pieces of jewelry were the favourite amulets of the age. 108



(f) u t h a r k g w h n i j p i r s t b e m l n g d o
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24

The 24-character futhark on the Kylver stone, Gotland, from c. AD 400. The by-staves of the f-rune have disappeared, runes 4, 16 and 19 are reverse runes. Note that ʀ p precedes ʃ i and that ʀ d comes before ʀ o.

At this point, however, we are only interested in the Vadstena bracteate because of its alphabet, well preserved apart from the last rune ʀ, which is hidden under the eyelet. In ending with this rune it differs from the Kylver stone but corresponds to the Grumpan bracteate. Let us compare it with two rather garbled Danish bracteate-futharks, one from Lindkær and one from Over Hornbæk (no. 3) (both North Jutland). To complete

the comparison we add a mirror-image of the Kylver alphabet, since the three bracteates have their futharks going from right to left.



Two very garbled Danish futhark inscriptions (Lindkær, Over Hornbæk) along with the alphabets on the Vadstena bracteate and the Kylver stone, both from Sweden. Four of the Vadstena runes are in different order from that of the Kylver futhark. In addition, the Vadstena alphabet is divided into three “families”, and the p-rune is replaced by a b-rune. The Over Hornbæk futhark doubtless had ƿ as the last rune. Order from the top: Lindkær, Over Hornbæk, Vadstena, Kylver (the last one reversed).

On the basis of these inscriptions and with the aid of variants from other inscriptions from Period 1, it is possible to set up a Scandinavian futhark norm:

ƿ n þ f r c ʌ y x p h h t t i ʒ h [*] k j y z t b m p m t o ʒ ʌ x
f u t h a r k g w h n i j a p i r s t b e m l n g d o

The normalised Scandinavian 24-character futhark. The runes p i and d o follow the order of the Kylver alphabet, though it should be stressed that the order of these runes is uncertain. Further, p and i soon went out of use but they were *still kept in the alphabet*. p is not found in any intelligible inscriptions, i in gläugir on the otherwise garbled bracteate inscription Nebenstedt 1 (Krause, p. 269) and in raīhan on the Caistor by Norwich astragalus.

In Period 1 the runes were in use all over *Germania*, or rather in all the areas settled by Germanic tribes, but only on movable objects. The earliest rune stones were set up in Norway and Sweden c. AD 300–400.

The English or Anglo-Saxon futhork

This futhork was presumably developed around AD 500 (± 50) on the basis of the West Germanic 24-character futhark, since its h-rune (𐌺) has a double cross-bar, unlike the North Germanic (Scandinavian) h-rune with only a single bar. The Anglo-Saxon futhork added seven new symbols, all but one of them placed at the end of the alphabet, as so often happens when an alphabet is enlarged. The a-rune of the 24-character futhark now provides three symbols: ƿ, o, appears as the fourth rune, while ƿ, a, and ƿ, æ, are given positions 26 and 27. The normal Anglo-Frisian futhork looks like this:

ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ
f u t h o r k g w h n i j g h p x s t b e m l n g d o e a æ y e a g k k

For comparison, here is the 28-character futhork inlaid in silver on the so-called Thames *scramasax* (a one-edged sword). Some of its anomalies can be explained by the fact that metalworkers were usually illiterate.



The futhork on the Thames scramasax.

THE 16-CHARACTER FUTHARK

A new futhark arose in Period 2, the *Viking Age*, about AD 800 or a little earlier. The old 24-character futhark had fallen into a state of decay towards the end of Period 1 and it was now reduced to sixteen characters. This new futhark is preserved in its oldest form on a stone from Gørlev (Sjælland), normally dated c. 900. It can hardly be later than that, but it may be a generation or two earlier: only new finds can tell us for sure.



f u t h a r k h n i a s t b m l r

The Gørlev futhark. Note that in spite of the reduction in the number of runes there are two a-runes (the first nasalised *a*, as in French before *n*) and two r-runes (the first a tongue-tip trill). The by-staves on the nasal *a*-rune emerge roughly from the top of the upright, a remnant of the old 24-character futhark. A normal Viking Age *a*-rune has the form *ᚪ*.

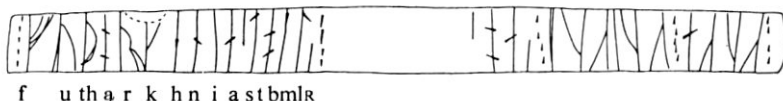
On the basis of this futhark and with the help of variant rune forms from other Viking Age inscriptions we can construct the following normalised (Danish) futhark of Period 2:

ƒ (F) ƚ (h) ʀ (D) ʁ (ʃ) R (R) ʁ * ʁ ʁ ʁ (H) ʁ ʁ (B) ʁ (P) ʁ ʁ ʁ ʁ
f u t h a r k h n i a s t b m l r

The normalised Danish futhark of the Viking Age.

- 29 A variant of this Danish futhark, the *stut-rune* or *short-rune futhark* (also called the short-twig or Swedish-Norwegian futhark), is found as early as c. 800 in South Schleswig (formerly Danish territory), carved on a *kefli* (a stick, either of wood or bone) found during excavations at Hedeby (spelt *haiþabu* on rune stones), a renowned trading-town of the Viking Age. As is evident from both historical sources and the 194ff. inscriptions on the Hedeby stones, there was a period of

Swedish rule in Hedeby before and during the reign of the Danish king, Gorm the Old (died c. 930-940), and it is therefore not surprising to find Swedish inscriptions at this site. Indeed, it could be suggested that the stut-runes originated in the Hedeby realm as a purely Swedish invention. This stut-rune (Swedish-Norwegian) futhark changed a few rune forms in the Danish futhark of the Viking Age and was of the greatest importance in the development of the runic alphabet of Period 3, the Middle Ages. It has the following appearance on the Hedeby *kefli*:



The Swedish-Norwegian or stut-rune futhark (short-twig runes) on the Hedeby *kefli* from about 800. From a tracing by Aslak Liestøl. The runes at the other end of the stick (upside down in relation to the futhark) read: kuka kuikui saar, presumably cryptic or secret runes.

Before we return to the Danish runes, let us mention the so-called (Swedish) Hälsinge runes or staveless runes. They represent an even greater simplification than the Swedish-Norwegian runes which, as we saw, merely shortened the branches or by-staves of the old characters. The Hälsinge runes went so far as to dispense with the main upright staves themselves, so that the intended letter or sound was indicated by the by-stave or -staves alone — a kind of runic stenography [3].

The reduction of the runic alphabet from 24 to 16 characters was the result of a comparatively long development that began with sporadic signs of dissolution in the older futhark, a dissolution distinctly visible in inscriptions from the end of Period 1. It is also worth noting that the reduction of the futhark coincided with a simplification of many of the runic characters: each of the runes in the Viking Age futhark has

only a single main stave. This was a futhark made by people on the move.

The 16-character futhark was soon seen to be a little too radical: the runes were easier to carve than the old ones but the inscriptions were harder to read. The runes ‘trik’ could be read as *trik*, *trek*, *drig*, *dreg*, *tring*, *dreng*, etc. For this reason, in Sven Forkbeard’s time, c. 980, three *pointed* or *dotted runes* were added, presumably inspired by Anglo-Saxon runic practice. However, these dotted runes never became fully fledged members of the futhark – they were just “there”. As in other alphabets, these new letters were formed by the addition of a small mark – in this case a dot – to indicate the altered sound values of three runes: a dot in the i-rune (i) made it an e (†), a dot in the k-rune (ƿ) made it a g (ƿ̇), and a dotted u-rune (u) was used to denote y (u̇). The two dots in the m-rune, on the other hand, were purely decorative
28 (see the normalised futhark above).

The 16-character futhark was not built in a day. The runes must have gone through a period of transition before the alphabet finally attained the form that was to prove victorious. In some inscriptions we still encounter the older futhark’s m-rune (M) or h-rune (H), which were replaced in the younger futhark by ʏ, ƿ̇ and * respectively. The g-rune (x), which perhaps also appears on one occasion, was replaced by k (ƿ), and the w-rune (ƿ) by u (u). The epigraphic trend in the short alphabets of the Viking Age can be clearly seen in these old and new runes: a simplification with one vertical stave in place of two.

THE MEDIEVAL FUTHORK

The *third and final period* of the runic alphabet is the Middle Ages, beginning around 1050 – and here we are fully justified in speaking of a runic alphabet instead of a futhark. As we know, the name “alphabet” is derived from the first two letters of the Greek alphabet, alpha and beta. To be sure, the original futhark order of the runes is preserved in the Middle Ages, in a form influenced by the stut-rune futhark. But as time goes on, the influence of the Latin alphabet (first known

in Denmark on coins of King Sven Forkbeard c. 985–1014) caused the creation of so many new runic characters that in order to take stock of the inventory we must put the runes into alphabetical order.

A goodly number of medieval futhorks (as they are now called – see the caption below) have been preserved. We find them for example on ashlar in the romanesque churches, marked by workmen who preferred to number their tie-beams with the runes \mathbb{F} \mathbb{N} \mathbb{B} \mathbb{A} and so on instead of with numeral strokes $|$ $||$ $|||$ $||||$ [4]. The futhork we choose, however, was carved on a rib-bone:



f u t h o r k h n i a s t b m l y

The medieval futhork on a rib-bone found at Lund (Skåne). We now speak of the futhork, not futhark – the sound value of the fourth rune explains why. The last rune, formerly \mathbb{R} , now stands for y . \mathbb{H} s and \mathbb{T} t have retained their Viking Age shapes; like a and n , the latter normally appears “one-sided”, i.e. \mathbb{T} , in medieval inscriptions. This inscription is presumably from early in Period 3, as the order of m and l also suggests. In the later Middle Ages these two runes switched places (under the influence of the Roman alphabet). For other medieval futhorks see below. 399

If we fill out this futhork with all the new characters and variants, the alphabet looks like this:

\mathbb{A}	\mathbb{B}	\mathbb{C}	\mathbb{D}	\mathbb{E}	\mathbb{F}	\mathbb{G}	\mathbb{H}	\mathbb{I}	\mathbb{J}	\mathbb{K}	\mathbb{L}	\mathbb{M}	\mathbb{N}	\mathbb{O}
a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o

\mathbb{P}	\mathbb{Q}	\mathbb{R}	\mathbb{S}	\mathbb{T}	\mathbb{U}	\mathbb{V}	\mathbb{W}	\mathbb{X}	\mathbb{Y}	\mathbb{Z}	\mathbb{A}	\mathbb{B}	\mathbb{C}	\mathbb{D}
p	q	r	s	t	th	u	v	w	x	y	z	a	b	c

The normalised medieval runic alphabet, put together from preserved futhorks and other inscriptions.

Inscriptions in this alphabet are found on gravestones, church

ashlars, ecclesiastical objects (fonts, censers, etc.), amulets, and in manuscripts. Except on the island of Bornholm, which was subject to strong Swedish influence, the custom of raising rune stones had died out.

CHARACTERISTICS AND PARTICULARS. TECHNIQUE

The forms of the runes. Even though at a primitive stage there can be many similarities in letter shapes found in both related and unrelated alphabets, every alphabet nevertheless has its own particular image and its own special character. The letter shapes of an alphabet are determined by the material in which they are written or cut: thus the characteristic appearance of cuneiform writing is a result of its impression in clay.

It is clear that runes were designed to be carved in wood, a practice which continued well into the Middle Ages (1200–1400). This use is abundantly evident from some 600 runic inscriptions on wooden sticks (“bills of lading”, messages, love-letters, etc.) excavated in recent years at Bryggen in Bergen, Norway, one of the great commercial centres of medieval Scandinavia [5].

But even if we did not have this explicit testimony, we could tell from the shapes of runes that they were made to be cut in wood: there is not a single horizontal line among the runes and not a single curved one either. Horizontal lines would easily become lost or hard to read in the grain of the wood. It is therefore on metal and stone that we first meet runes that have horizontal or rounded lines. For this reason, too, it is obvious that the ng-rune in the Kylvær alphabet is not an original detail, nor is the e rune Π as opposed to \mathbb{M} .

Direction. In the oldest runic inscriptions the direction of the writing is variable: sometimes left to right, sometimes right to left, sometimes *bustrophedon* (i.e. in the way an ox ploughs a field) – when the carver has reached the end of one line he begins the next not “from the beginning” but writes backwards and with runes reversed, so that the direction changes with each line: left–right, right–left, left–right, etc. As we shall see,

Starup stone, South Jutland. 140 cm. Retouched.

— The only rune stone from Period 2 with an inscription from right to left, and therefore possibly the oldest from that period, though it is impossible to say whether it is from c. 700 or c. 800. With their ungainly and irregular forms (partly through the result of weathering), the runes remind us of Norwegian and Swedish inscriptions of the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries, when stones with reverse runes were part of the normal order of things. — The inscription reads: *qiriks [i] kubl*, Erik's memorial (*kubl* = *kumbl*).



this is a common feature of all alphabet use at an early stage. Many parents have probably noticed that their children adopt boustrophedon sequence when they are learning to write.

The youngest Danish inscription in runes that must be read from right to left, is on the Starup stone in South Jutland. It can be dated to the early part of Period 2, the Viking Age, in round numbers about AD 800. In large, clumsy runes the carver has written: *qiriks kubl*, Erik's memorial (on the meaning of *kumbl* see below). Reversed runes as part of a boustrophedon sequence, on the other hand, are found on a rune stone from as late as about AD 1000. 213

Awkward and irregular letters are not a peculiarity of runic writing (those that occur are mostly in older inscriptions) but, like variable direction, are the kind of irregularities found in every writing system that is not yet over the age of puberty.

Ligatures and same-stave runes. Even the earliest inscriptions contain ligatured runes or bind-runes, i.e. two (possibly three) runes on either side of a shared vertical stave. The aim of such a writing practice is generally to save effort and space. The same custom is found all over Europe, and in Denmark is known for example also in our oldest inscriptions in Roman lettering, where letters are both joined together and placed inside each other. If the runes a 𐐃 and 𐐅 are written together, the ligature rune 𐐃𐐅 is created; to show this in transliteration we place an arc over it, thus \widehat{ar} . The most prolific example of
 409 runic ligatures is on the medieval gravestone from Føvling (North Jutland), though there the artful and ingenious method of writing seems more likely to have been influenced by contemporary inscriptions in Latin letters than by the runic tradition.

While bind-runes usually reflect a desire to save labour and space (and to some extent perhaps to demonstrate competence), another type of ligature, that of *same-stave runes* (where many runes are distributed along the length of a common vertical stave), must be further explained as a kind of runic sport, prompted by a desire to make the message harder to decipher. Same-stave runes do not appear until the Viking Age; examples
 230 may be found on the stones from Sønder Kirkeby (Falster)
 196 and Haddeby 1 (South Jutland).

Reading runes was not something just anyone could do, and probably very few people were able to understand same-stave runes. Fewer still would have been capable of interpreting secret or cryptic runes, codes used by carvers to conceal their messages. We shall return to these systems later.

36 *Ideographs* (German *Begriffsrunen*). As we shall see below, each rune had its own name, and it occasionally happens that a rune-carver who wants to convey something like “(good) harvest” merely carves the j-rune 𐐱, whose name *jara* “year” signifies just that. Or he may write the f-rune alone to indicate the word “wealth”, since that is the name of this rune (ON *fé* “cattle, wealth”). A rune that represents its own name or idea in this way is called an ideograph. In Icelandic and Anglo-Saxon manuscripts runes are often used to stand for certain



Århus stone 5 (6 in DaRun), North Jutland. Close-up of the wide-cut runes where the pointed holes of the pick are still clearly distinguishable. The same technique is known from rock-carvings, cf. e.g. the Swedish Himmelstalund stone (Krause 1966, nr 54), which as well as ships and other figures has a short runic inscription carved in the same way: braido. Cf. the *römanesque* sculptor with his pick illustrated on p. 137.

words, as e.g. the *m*-rune for *maðr* “man”. More on these ideographs later.

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Painted runes. The Norwegian Einang stone tells us that “I...-guest painted the rune”, and a more recent Swedish stone (Södermanlands runinskr. nr. 347) says “Esbjörn carved and Ulf painted”. In the “Words of the High One” (*Hávamál* – Norse verses purporting to contain the wisdom of Odin), we read *svá ek rist ok í rúnum fák* “thus I carve and in runes I paint”. As it happens, these passages refer to two distinct notions of “painting”. The word *faihido* “painted” on the Einang stone must indicate that someone who knew how to

write runes gave the stone-carver a text to copy which he had painted on wood or bark or perhaps on the stone itself: it is only by making this inference that we can explain similar rune-master formulas punched or cut on metal. The other two examples, on the other hand, attest the practice of painting in the runes after they were carved on the stone. The usual colour was red, as is evident from traces of paint preserved in some Swedish inscriptions and on the Danish stones in London and Winchester. In addition to the red runes the London stone had its background and relief painted in the same earth colours as can still sometimes be detected on romanesque fonts: black, blue, red and yellow.

Carving techniques [6]. These depended chiefly on the material to be inscribed. For wood or bone a knife was used; for metal a burin, punch, or tremolo iron (on tremolo runes see later 123). As far as we can tell, a heavy short-handled pick was used to carve runes in stone, rather than a chisel. Marks left behind by the pick are still visible in several inscriptions [6a].

THE NAMES OF THE RUNES

Each rune had its own name, and in that they resembled the letters of the Phoenician and Greek alphabets – Etruscan and Latin letters, on the other hand, were called after their sounds, a, b, c, etc.

As we shall see, the meanings of the runic names are as confusing a collection as the Phoenician and Greek were. Probably they are as old as the runes themselves, however – given the conservative nature of alphabets everywhere: from the very beginning every letter had to be called something. The Germanic peoples abandoned the alphabetical order which the Phoenicians had passed on to Greek, Etruscan and Latin, and they gave their letters, the runes, new names – something the creators of the Russian alphabet did too.

In fact we know at first hand only the names of the 16 runes of the Viking Age futhark, but by comparing names in Gothic and Anglo-Saxon we can come up with plausible names for the remaining eight.

Rune names of the Viking Age

ƿ	f	cattle, wealth (ON <i>fé</i>)
ᚱ	u	aurochs (<i>úrr</i>)
þ	þ, th	giant (<i>þurs</i> ; in Anglo-Saxon the name is <i>þorn</i> “thorn”)
ᚦ	ā, o	god (<i>áss</i> , <i>ǫss</i> ; pl. <i>æsir</i>)
ᚱ	r	riding, chariot (<i>reið</i>)
ᚷ	k	ulcer, boil (<i>kaun</i>)
* ᚹ	h	hail (<i>hag(al)</i>)
ᚠ	n	need, distress (<i>nauð</i>)
ᚱ	i	ice (from PN <i>īsaz</i> , older <i>eisaz</i>)
ᚦ	a	year (<i>ár</i> , older <i>jara</i> ; this was the j-rune in the older futhark)
ᚱ	s	sun (<i>sól</i>)
ᚦ	t	Týr (pagan god)
ᚱ	b	birch(=twig) (<i>bjarkan</i>)
ᚷ	m	man (<i>maðr</i> , <i>mannr</i>)
ᚱ	l	water (<i>lqgr</i>) [7]
ᚱ	R	yew (<i>ýr</i>) or elk (<i>elgr</i>)

The eight runes to make up the 24-character futhark can be partially reconstructed thus:

×	g	gift (PN <i>gebo</i>)
ƿ	w	joy (<i>wunjo</i> ?)
ᚷ	ī	yew (<i>if(h)waz</i> , ON <i>ýr</i> , orig. <i>ç</i> a palatal spirant, <i>ich</i>)
ᚱ	p	? (<i>perþo</i> ?)
ᚱ	e	horse (<i>ehwaz</i>)
◊	ng	Ing (pagan god)
ᚱ	d	day (<i>dagaz</i>)
ᚱ	o	ON <i>óðal</i> , inherited land (<i>opila</i>)

Attempts to explain these names – as elements in a sacred or cultic system, for example – have been doomed to the same failure as corresponding attempts to explain the Phoenician characters. We may safely relegate them to the world of fantasy.

THE REALM OF THE RUNES

Runic inscriptions from Period 1 (the Iron Age) are found from the Scandinavian countries in the north to Rumania in the south, from as far east as Poland and as far west as Burgundy and England — broadly speaking, that is, in the whole territory occupied by Germanic tribes, permanently or impermanently. Roman-occupied territory used Latin writing and to a lesser extent Ogam, a strange Irish alphabet composed solely of vertical strokes but resembling the futhark in its threefold division into “families”.

On the European mainland the older runic inscriptions are few and far between. It is only in Scandinavia (where the oldest are found) and England (all of later date) that they occur in larger clusters.

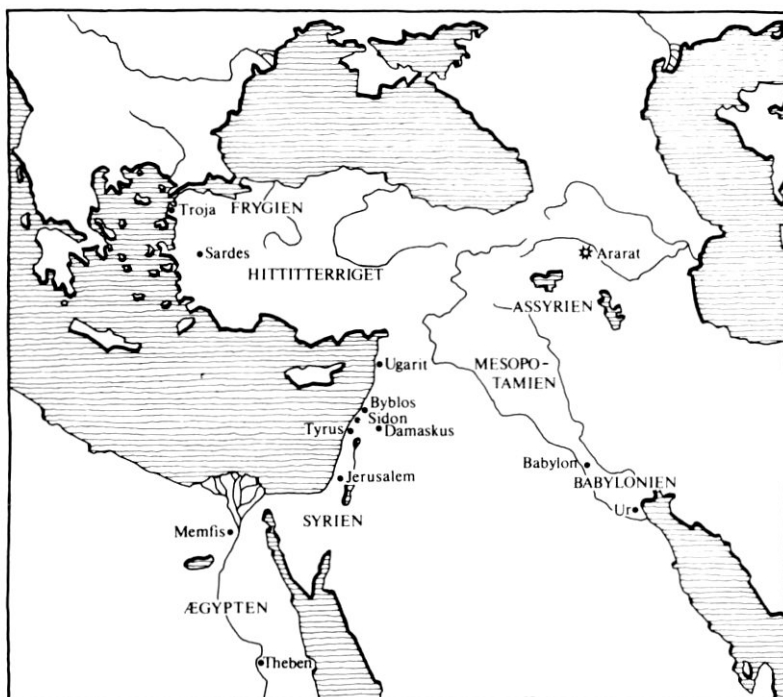
The dating of continental inscriptions written in an East Germanic language is still somewhat uncertain. The so-called Pietroassa ring (Rumania) is dated to the end of the fourth century because of associated finds. The lance-heads from Kowel (Poland) and Dahmsdorf (central Germany) are usually dated to the third century [8].

In contrast to these so-called Gothic inscriptions, the continental inscriptions in South and West Germanic are with one exception (Liebenau) no older than the Anglo-Saxon inscriptions, i.e. from the sixth century at the earliest [9]. Cf. however the Torsbjerg inscriptions and Caistor-by-Norwich.

The origins of the runes

Where were the runes born? Were they created out of the blue, or did the man, or men, who devised the system seek inspiration in an alphabet already in existence — Phoenician or Greek or Etruscan or Latin? And if so, which?

These are the first questions to be answered, and our answers must be soundly based on *principles that we can observe generally operating in the history of alphabets*. For example, if we want to link a letter of one alphabet to that of





Asia Minor was *the cradle of the art of writing*. Cuneiform was already a letter-alphabet, i.e. a system which gave each sound in a word its own symbol (in contrast to syllabic writing and to hieroglyphs where each concept had its own pictorial sign). The Phoenicians established the letter-alphabet about 1000 BC and thereby set the crown on a thousand years' development.


another, a prime principle derived from alphabet history requires us to establish a correspondence between them not only in form but also in sound value. Without such principles as our solid foundation, we cannot allow other factors to play any part in the discussion.






In order to claim that one alphabet has served as the basis of another, *a good number* (but not all) of the letters must correspond in form and value. In the process of adopting an alphabet from another culture, particularly when the two languages differ radically in their sounds (as Greek and Phoenician did), some new letters will always be created and others given new sound values.

In dealing with runes we must also have regard to the additional principle that horizontal and curved lines had to be avoided because wood was the material they were meant for.

For example, if we take the letter P (which stood for the sound *r* in Phoenician, Greek and Etruscan, the sound *p* in Latin) and make a rune of it, we get the shape . Now a rune with precisely this shape actually exists – but its sound value is *w*. In no circumstances, therefore, can it go back to the P of Phoenician, Greek, Etruscan or Latin. There is agreement in form, but not in sound.

On the other hand, it is extremely likely that a connection exists between the rune  *r* and the Latin capital R, while the forms of *r* in Greek (P) and Etruscan (𐌔 𐌕) can be dismissed at once as possible models for the *r*-rune.

It is also crystal-clear that there is not merely similarity but real kinship between runic  *h* and Latin H, and that the very existence of this rune speaks against any alleged connection between the futhark and the Greek alphabet which at the time in question – around the birth of Christ – had no letter for *h* at all.

In contrast, the agreement between the *s*-rune with its form  or  and Latin S, Etruscan  *s* (value *s*), Greek  (sigma) and Phoenician  (*shin*) can be explained by the simple fact that the Latin, Greek and Etruscan forms all descend from an *s*-form in the Phoenician mother-alphabet, preserved relatively unchanged.

Since (as we have seen) the various letters in the various alphabets seem to face in any direction they please, we might well conclude that in primitive alphabets – or rather at the primitive stage of any writing system – every letter was viewed as a self-contained unit, an independent individual. It therefore mattered very little whether it faced right or left or up or down, or even whether it was the same size as other letters. All of this also applies to runes, as we noted a few pages back

*33 (on the Starup stone).

By now it is already clear that the runic alphabet was not created *ex nihilo*: there are definite connections between the futhark and the ancient alphabets of the Mediterranean, the ancestor of which was North Semitic or Phoenician. It might

therefore be wise to look briefly at what happened when these old alphabets were borrowed by one culture from another. For the fact of such borrowing is something that specialists in the history of alphabets do agree on [10], and it is evident not only from the letters themselves but also from the order they have in the alphabet, which is largely the same in Phoenician, Greek, Etruscan and Latin.

Perhaps if we proceed in this direction, the riddle of the runes may prove less of a mystery. Let us begin at the beginning.

THE PHOENICIAN ALPHABET

Phoenician writing represents the first alphabetical system [11]: not picture-writing, not a syllabary, but an alphabet that divided each word into its smallest units: *letters*. These letters could easily be combined to form *words*, just as the numerals 1 to 10 (we call them Arabic but they were actually invented in India) can be combined to form larger numbers. These two discoveries can be quite safely regarded, as the most important foundation stones of our civilisation [12].

Scholars believe that the Phoenician alphabet was fully developed by c. 1000 BC. The so-called *Ahiram inscription* from Byblos (see map) comes from this time. Let us compare this ancient alphabet with the younger Phoenician alphabet used in the so-called *Mesa inscription* from 842 BC. Both inscriptions read from right to left. We do this for three reasons. First, to show the internal development of our oldest alphabet. Second, because we suspect that the Mesa alphabet represents the stage at which the Greeks came to know and adopt this marvellous instrument (which could transmit messages over immeasurable distances). And third, to introduce the reader in a gradual and painless way to one of the most exciting (though problematical) fields of study there is, and one that is crucial to our understanding of runes: alphabet history.

The Phoenician system consisted of a series of signs, each named in accordance with what is called the acrophonic principle, i.e. each name began with the sound that the sign represented, e.g. *alf* (cattle), *bet* (house), *delt* (door), *zajin* (weapon), *jod* (hand), *kaf* (palm of the hand), *mem* (water), *hayin* (eye), *pe* (mouth), *shin* (tooth), *tau* (sign), etc. It was obviously a motley assortment, just like the names of the runes, with no clear pattern of meanings.

Some scholars conclude from these names that the letters were once pictures or hieroglyphs and that their present shapes represent stylised hieroglyphs. In fact, with a little

Phoenician c. 1000 BC The Ahiiram alphabet			Phoenician c. 850 BC The Mesa alphabet + variants names and sound values as in the Ahiiram alphabet
name		sound value breathed sound	
alf	K		𐤀 [A]
bet	𐤁	b	𐤁
geml/gaml	1	g	1
delt	[𐤃]	d	𐤃 [𐤃]
he	𐤄	h	𐤄
uau	𐤅 𐤆	w	𐤅 [𐤅]
zajin	I	z	I
chet	𐤇	kh	𐤇 [𐤇]
thet	⊕	t	⊕
jod	𐤈	j	𐤈
kaf	𐤉	k	𐤉 [𐤉]
lambd	𐤊	l	𐤊
mem	𐤋	m	𐤋
nun	𐤌	n	𐤌 [𐤌]
semk/samekh	𐤍	s(ks)	𐤍 [𐤍]
hayin	O	guttural sound	O
pe	𐤎	p	𐤎 [𐤎]
sade	[𐤏]	s(ts)	𐤏 [𐤏]
qof	[𐤐]	q	𐤐 [𐤐]
rosh/resh	𐤑	r	𐤑
shin	𐤒	s(sj)	𐤒 [𐤒]
tau	X	t	X

imagination some of the letters in the oldest Phoenician alphabet can be construed as representations of their names. No one can deny, for example, that *lamd* looks like a staff, that *mem* (placed horizontal) reminds us of water or waves, and that *alf* (a breathed sound, not an *a* at all) could be a stylised ox-head. But if we go on, it soon becomes clear that no ordinary imagination is needed if we are to find more similarities, such as those needed to explain *jod* or *kaf*, for instance. We might say then that identity of letter and object is a possible assumption but not a necessary one. The names could well be inherited from picture-writing, but they could also be borrowed, like the Greek names of letters, *alpha*, *beta*, *gamma*, *delta*, and so on. Finally, the names might be complete innovations, as the rune names were.

The shapes of Phoenician letters make it easy to see that they were not intended for writing on clay or wood. As a matter of fact, the Phoenicians wrote mainly on papyrus.

The Phoenician writing system was consonantal, as is its Hebrew descendant today. But, if necessary, vowels could be concealed in an inscription to avoid misunderstanding because some of the letters (e.g. *alf*, *jod*, *uau*) could function as vowels (*a*, *i*, *u*) as well as consonants. But if consonants alone could do the job without producing ambiguities – if only one pronunciation was possible or the meaning was clear from the context – then there was no need to use vowel signs.

Obviously such a consonantal writing system can save a lot of space. We can try it in English:

runologists are extraordinarily amiable and sane citizens
rnlgsts r xtrrdnrl mbl nd sn ctzns [12a]

Anyone who had grown up speaking the language could probably read a consonantal system without much difficulty. Our problems are different in dealing with a dead language, however: absence of vowels often makes it impossible for us to know the pronunciation of certain words.

The Phoenician alphabet was an excellent tool, lasting more than a thousand years without major modifications. Philologi-

cally speaking, the introduction of written vowels, usually attributed to the Greeks, was a step forward in the representation of language; in terms of economy (of both time and space), however, it was a step in the wrong direction.

A closer look at the Phoenician alphabet reveals no fewer than four s-sounds (sibilants): *zajin*, *samekh*, *śade*, *shin*, all scattered throughout the alphabet. Similarly, the two gutturals *alf* and *hayin* are located far apart, as are the closely related obstruents *b* and *p*. Clearly the letters make a phonological helter-skelter – *just like the runic alphabet*. If you want an alphabet that absolutely reeks of the “phoneticism” of learned grammarians, try the Arabic. What kind of people, then, created the Phoenician alphabet?

In some of the huge empires of the ancient world writing probably came into being at a ruler’s dictate, but it is likely that the origin and rapid diffusion of the alphabet among the Semitic peoples and their neighbours is best explained by their *lively commercial activity* [13], both internally and with distant lands, where they maintained trading-posts. It was particularly at such depots that an alphabetic script must have met an enormous need, making trading, stocktaking and pricing (the letters have numerical significance as well) far easier than before. As businessmen – the culture-bearers of the time – the Semites were not interested in gutturals, dentals, spirants and so on – what they wanted was a practical handy instrument that could express the sounds of their language (and perhaps that of their customers too) with the fewest possible signs. This useful tool was (and is) the alphabet – created by the Phoenicians and still used by us today.

In the next section we shall see what happens when an alphabet is transferred from one people to another – still in our search for the key to the riddle of the runes.

Ole Worm, Denmark’s first runologist and author of *Danica Literatura* published in 1636, had the notion that runes were a loan from Hebrew, and other people have sometimes had the same idea. To them it may be gently pointed out that the only real identity (i.e. correspondence in form and sound) between the two is in *lambd* (ℓ) and the l-rune (𐌗) and in *shin* (שׁ) and the s-rune (𐌺), assuming as always that the direction of letters

is a matter of indifference in primitive stages of an alphabet's development.

THE GREEK ALPHABETS

The Phoenician alphabet of consonants was taken over by the Greeks around 1000–900 BC. By and large the Greeks adopted the forms and sound values of the Phoenician letters, their order, their names (in Greek form), and the right-to-left direction of the writing. They also took over the letters' numerical values. But they also supplemented the alphabet with *permanent vowel signs* and a few new consonants, as the table below shows.

It took the Greeks several centuries to arrive at a common alphabet. The great reform of 403 BC, when Athens adopted the Ionic writing system, merely standardised a myriad of local scripts into three main groups, with marked differences between them: the so-called western, eastern and northern groups.

This original variation among the Greek scripts is an interesting feature and, like so much else, it can help us to understand the runes. For such variation expresses a law of alphabet history which states: *The alphabet mirrors society*. Many independent societies — many alphabets or variants. One large cohesive and firmly-governed state — one stable alphabet. The independent petty kingdoms of the Greeks — the world empire of the Romans.

It is immediately clear from the chart on p. 46 that five new letters were added after *tau*. Did these letters already exist among the Phoenicians (merely adopted by the Greeks), or did the Greeks invent them? I prefer not to get involved in that debate and simply acknowledge the existence of these five letters.

The next thing we notice in the columns of letters is that *beta* now has two “loops” instead of one and that *iota* has become a simple vertical stroke. But the greatest change is that the Greek alphabet has regular written vowels, formed from

Phoenician c. 850 BC
The Mesa alphabet + variants

name	sound	value
alf	𐤀	breathed sound
bet	𐤁	b
gemi/gaml	𐤂	g
delt	𐤃	d
he	𐤄	h
uau	𐤅	w
zajin	𐤆	z
(c)heth	𐤇	kh
thet	𐤈	th
jod	𐤉	j
kaf	𐤊	k
lambd	𐤋	l
mem	𐤌	m
nun	𐤍	n
semk/samekh	𐤎	s
hayin	𐤏	guttural sound
pe	𐤐	p
sade	𐤑	s
qof	𐤒	q
rosh/resh	𐤓	r
shin	𐤔	sj
tau	𐤕	t

Greek c. 660 BC
The Samos alphabet
(Eastern Greek)

name	sound	value
alpha	Α	a
beta	Β	b
gamma	Γ	g
delta	Δ	d
epsilon	Ε	e
uau	Ϝ	w
zeta	Ζ	z
eta	Η	e
theta	Θ	th
iota	Ι	i
kappa	Κ	k
lambda	Λ	l
my	Μ	m
ny	Ν	n
[ksi]	Ξ	ks
omikron	Ο	o
pi	Π	p
mangler		
koppa	Ϙ	q
ro	ϙ	r
sigma	Σ	s
tau	Τ	t
ypsilon	Υ	y
phi	Φ	f
khi	Χ	kh*
psi	Ψ	ps
omega	Ω	o
* Western Greek	Χ	ks

Etruscan c. 800 BC
Marsiliana and others
name (and sound value)

a	Α
be	β
ke ka	𐌕 >)*
de	𐌔
e	𐌔 𐌕
ve	𐌕
[ks]	𐌕
[h]	𐌕 𐌕
[th]	𐌕
i	𐌕 𐌕
ka	𐌕 𐌕
el	𐌕
me	𐌕 𐌕*
ne	𐌕 𐌕*
[s]	𐌕
o	𐌕 𐌕
pe	𐌕 𐌕
[s]	𐌕 𐌕
[q]	𐌕
re	𐌕 𐌕*
se	𐌕 𐌕
te	𐌕
[u]	𐌕 𐌕
[s]	𐌕
[ph]	𐌕
[kh]	𐌕 𐌕
later additions:	
[f]	𐌕
[s]	𐌕

* youngest variants
(after 400 BC)

some of the Phoenician letters that the Greeks did not need, namely those expressing guttural and aspirate sounds. Α (*alf*), 𐌕 (*he*), 𐌕 (*c*)*heth* and ο (*hayin*, *oyin*) have become *alpha* (*a*),

epsilon (short *e*), *eta* (long *e*) and *omikron* (“little” *o*), while *jod* has become *iota* (*i*). The reason why *he* and *heth* (*cheth*) could become e-sounds may be that the Greek alphabet took shape among a people who spoke an “h-less” dialect. (Such dialects are known elsewhere, including Scandinavia – we have rune stones from Skåne that write ‘afpi’ and ‘an’ for ‘hafpi’ and ‘han’.)

To these six new vowel signs were added *ypsilon* (*y*) (from Phoenician *uau*?) and Ω *omega* (“big” *o*), the latter being a new sign for long *o*, which existed only in the eastern Greek group. These two were placed last in the alphabet, along with the new consonants Φ Φ (*ph* = *f*), Θ or χ = *kh* (in the east, *ks* in the west), and Ψ (*ps*). The Greeks had no use for *qof*, since they already had *kaf*. They took it over to begin with but soon dropped it along with *uau*.

One of the things – perhaps the most important of them – that separated the eastern from the western group was the character Θ or, more commonly, χ . As mentioned above, this was assigned the sound value *kh* by the eastern Greeks and with this value it entered the classical Greek alphabet introduced in Athens in 403 BC (and so makes part of the Greek alphabet of today). The western Greeks, on the other hand, gave χ the value *ks*, and the character was adopted with that value by Etruscans and Romans (and from the Romans by us). Eastern Greeks used *samekh* for *ks*, which also entered the classical alphabet with that value. The western Greeks discarded *samekh* and *śade* and kept only the sibilant ϖ *shin*, which got the name *sigma* and later became part of the classical alphabet too.

As we observe these ancient alphabets passing from one people to another – hoping as we do to gain insight into the relations of the runes with the alphabets of the Mediterranean world – we cannot help but notice, for example, that only five or six letters in the entire Samos alphabet are precisely identical to their Phoenician counterparts. At the same time, most of the letters are rather close variants of their models, and completely new formations are rare: B with two loops and I (a vertical stroke) have no correspondences in Phoenician, although they do occur in Phrygian (in northern Asia Minor,

see map). As we have observed, new letters are often placed at the end of the alphabet and stay there even if they become obsolete later on. Once created, an alphabet rarely changes the order of its letters, particularly not if these letters also serve as numbers, as the Phoenician and Greek ones did.

At first the writing direction followed Phoenician practice (right to left), occasionally also boustrophedon (cf. p. 32 above). In the early period the Greeks seem to have lacked a sense for regularity of letter-size and evenness of line, like the Phoenicians and other users of alphabets at a primitive stage. Regularity in these features was not achieved until the fifth century BC, and by the time we get a consistent left-to-right script direction we are in the “classical age”. It may be noted that punctuation marks were not generally used.

The Greeks kept the letter sequence of the Phoenician alphabets, but it is worth pointing out (in our quest to comprehend the runes) that not all borrowers of alphabets retain their original order. The *Arabic* and *Ethiopian* alphabets, for example, were both modelled on the Phoenician but both diverge from its order. The Arabic alphabet probably arose in the fourth century AD and, though it adopted the Phoenician names in abbreviated form for its letters, it radically altered their sequence. It ran: 'alif, ba, ta, tha, jim, ha, kha, dal, dhal, ra, za, sin, shin, šad, ḍad, ṭa, ṣa, 'ayin, etc. [14] Systematised phonetics! In the Ethiopian alphabet, on the other hand, we find that the first half of the alphabet corresponds to the second half of the Phoenician one, and the second half to the first [15].

The Greek alphabet in turn gave birth to several writing systems, in use to the west, north and east: the greatest of its offspring (but second generation) was the Russian alphabet. A couple of examples from Asia Minor will serve to show how the transfer might take place: of the 29 signs in the *Lycian* alphabet, some 17 go back to Greek originals, while the rest are derived from the Cyprian alphabet. The *Carian* alphabet is also no doubt a mixture of Greek and Cyprian. *Lydian* is a mixed alphabet of another kind and reminds us of the runes: 16 of its 26 letters are probably from Greek while the source of the others remains to be identified. (This alphabet, inciden-

tally, has a symbol for f, shaped like a figure 8, which is also found in an alphabet that has long been a focal point in the debate on the origin of the runes, and one that we shall soon get to know intimately – Etruscan and its offshoots.)

A remarkable chapter in the history of borrowed scripts is offered by *the Iberian alphabets*, which pre-date the Roman conquest of the Iberian peninsula (c. 200 BC). Before that time Greeks and Phoenicians (coming from Carthage) were engaged in commerce there, and it is from their alphabets that the Iberian ones were derived. Whatever the precise details may be, three pre-Latin alphabets are known from the Iberian peninsula: but their system (half-alphabet, half-syllabary) is so uniform that scholars assume they were invented by a single man of singular intelligence, learning and ingenuity [16]. Unfortunately Iberian is like Etruscan: we know the sound values of the letters but not the language itself.

The Iberian alphabets contained 28 or 29 letters, more than half of which denoted syllables: a, e, i, o, o/u, u, y, l, m, n, r, r, s, s, s, ba, be, bi, bo, bu, ka, ke, ki, ko, ku, ta, te, ti, to, tu, and z. About half the single letters may easily be derived from Phoenician or Greek (ε e, Ϛ l, Ϙ m, ϙ n, the three s-letters, one of the r-letters, etc.), while others agree in form but not in value (e.g. Η η o, Τ τ u, Ϙ ρ r). A letter like † e, on the other hand, has no direct model in either of the source-alphabets. The syllable signs appear more or less freely invented, even though some of them resemble characters in other alphabets, including the runic (e.g. Λ λ ka, < ke, J j ki, Ø ø ko, ♦ ku). Such accidental similarities occur in all primitive alphabets.

It is instructive for us who stalk the riddle of the runes to observe that only about half the letters in these alphabets were copied from Greek or Phoenician, even though the Iberian scripts were not created until about 450–400 BC, i.e. at a time when these ancient alphabets had long been established. The other Iberian letters are more or less free inventions.

The Swedish runologist, Otto von Friesen, argued that runes were derived from Greek cursive script, and his “Greek hypothesis” was dominant for a long time, not least because he was commissioned to write articles on runes in such influential publications as the *Encyclopedia Britannica* and Hoops’ *Real-*

The North Etruscan (Alpine) letters

	Raetic			Lepontic	Este Venetic	Noric	Etruscan	Runes
	Bolzano	Magré Lugano	Sondrio					
a	Λ Λ Λ A	Α Α [1]	Λ Λ Α 1	1 Λ Α Λ 1 Λ Λ	Α 1 1 Α V V	Λ	Α	Ɔ
b							(8)	8
g							>) = k	X = g
d							(D)	⊗
e	⋈ ⋈	⋈ ⋈	⋈ ⋈	⋈ 1 3	1	1	1 1	Ⓜ
v	1 1	1	?		1 1	1	1	ƴ = f
z	?	?	⋈ ⋈	⋈ ?	⋈ = d	⋈	1 ⋈ 1	Y
h	⋈ ⋈	⋈	?	?	⋈ ⋈ ⋈	⋈	⋈ ⋈ ⋈	⋈
th	?	?	?	?	⋈ (⊙ = t)	?	⊕ ⊗ ⊙	⋈
					⊙			
i								
k	⋈ ⋈	⋈ ⋈	? > ⋈	⋈ ⋈	⋈	⋈	⋈ ⋈ ⋈	<
l	⋈	1	Λ	⋈	1	?	⋈	⋈
m	⋈	⋈ ⋈ ⋈ ⋈ ⋈	⋈ ?	⋈ ⋈ ⋈ ⋈	⋈	?	⋈ ⋈	⋈
n	⋈ ⋈	⋈ N	⋈ N	⋈ ⋈	⋈ N	?	⋈ ⋈	⋈
samekh	+	+	+	+	+	+	⊕	+
o	-	-	-	+	+	⊗	(⊙ ⊙)	⊗
p	1 1	?	1	1	1	?	1 1 1	⋈ ⋈ ⋈
sade	⋈ ⋈ ⋈	⋈ ⋈	⋈	⋈ ⋈ ⋈	⋈	?	⋈ ⋈	
q							⋈ ⋈	
r	⋈	⋈ ⋈	?	⋈ ⋈	⋈	⋈	⋈ ⋈	R
shin	Y 5 2	5 2 7	2 3	5 2 ~	5	?	3 5	5 1 5
t	X ⋈	X ⋈	X	X ⋈	X	⋈ +	X	↑
u	V	Λ Y	Λ	V Y	Λ ^	X	Y Y V	Λ N
phi	⋈ ⋈	⋈ ⋈	?	⋈ ?	⋈ ⋈ = b	?	⋈ ⋈	
khi	Y ⋈	Y	?	Y ⋈ ?	Y ⋈ = g	?	Y ⋈	
psi								
ksi								
f							8	ƴ
ng								⊙
j								5
w								P
i								⋈

lexikon. It has now been abandoned for methodological and chronological reasons [17]. Recently Aage Kabell has tried to derive the runes from archaic Greek characters (in the Bronze Age). His extremely erudite contribution floats well above ground-level and would doubtless have been better left in his desk-drawer [18].

ETRUSCAN WRITING

Of the Italic alphabets Etruscan is the most important by far, especially if it was itself the source of the Italic script that later conquered the world: the Roman alphabet.

We do not know where the Etruscans acquired their alphabet (since it is generally believed that they were inhabiting the Italian peninsula at the time of its acquisition, it is not a problem that is bound up with the origins of the Etruscans themselves). We assume they got an alphabet c. 800 BC, a period when the Phoenician alphabet was firmly established but when Greek script (perhaps in more than one variety) was still evolving. But it is clear that these two alphabets form the chief sources of the Etruscan alphabet, whether we regard Phoenician as the direct ancestor [19] and the decidedly Greek

The alphabet charts

The charts of the North Etruscan letters are chiefly based on the tables in J. Whatmough, *The prae-Italic dialects*, on an alphabet chart prepared for a “paleo-Venetic” exhibition in Vicenza 1963 by G.B. Pellegrini, and for the Noric characters on the account of Magdalensberg by R. Egger in *Carinthia I-II*, 1959, 1961.

In the charts no regard has generally been paid to whether the letters are slanting or straight, face right or left, or stand on their heads, and similarly no distinction is made between angular and rounded forms. Only the principal types are given. A reader anxious to see all the variants should refer to the sources mentioned above. — It is worth noting that the Alpine alphabets only know the Old Etruscan form for the letter *m*.

letters mere extras (a mixed alphabet), or imagine some unknown proto-alphabet among the Greeks as its progenitor [20]. These are unsolved enigmas and still matters of controversy. Nevertheless, it is certain that the Etruscan alphabet contains elements from Phoenician, eastern Greek and western Greek. The Lydian figure 8 for *f*, mentioned above, came to the Etruscans somewhat later (sixth century BC), and ⚡ for *s* was a later addition still.

In the course of the nineteenth century scholars succeeded in discovering the sound values of the Etruscan letters, although in fact the last of the many problems was not solved until the present century. Then E. Fiesel demonstrated in a simple but ingenious way that the character x, previously assumed to be from Phoenician *tau*, represented a sibilant (an *s*-sound) in early Etruscan. (The runic character for *j* offers a curious parallel to this.) But while we now know the sound values of the Etruscan letters, we are not so fortunate in our understanding of the inscriptions, although here too progress is being made from year to year. But this problem falls outside the scope of this book, where at the moment we are concerned with alphabets.

The Etruscan alphabet is preserved on a variety of objects, vases among them [21]. The oldest is the *Marsiliana alphabet*, carved on the raised border of a small ebony writing-tablet found in a large aristocratic grave-mound in Marsiliana d'Albegna. The grave is dated to c. 700 BC [22].

A glance at the table of alphabets on p. 46 reveals that the Marsiliana and the Greek Samos alphabets both have 26 letters in the same order. As far as the characters themselves go, the Etruscans might have got 𐤕 (*samekh*) from Phoenician or from eastern Greek, but not from western. On the other hand, 𐀓 (*tau*) cannot come from Phoenician, where *t* has the shape x. (This letter, which has different values in eastern and western Greek, only occurs in the oldest Etruscan inscriptions, where it represents an *s*-sound, as mentioned above.) Nor can ϕ be derived from Phoenician: this letter (*phi*, a bilabial *f*-sound) was a Greek invention, common to both the eastern and western groups. Etruscan 𐀞 or 𐀟 with the value *kh* must come from western Greek, since in eastern Greek it signifies *ps*.

One fact not revealed by the alphabet is that in the oldest inscriptions a labio-dental *f*-sound (like English *f*) was indicated by writing the letters *vh*. It was this combination of letters that was supplanted by the new character 8 towards the end of the sixth century. This kind of detail, as well as certain developments among the individual letters (e.g. *∩* *m* to *ℳ*, *∩* *r* to *∩*), allows us to assign relative dates to Etruscan inscriptions.

The Etruscan language did not have the voiced consonants *b*, *d*, *g* – at least, the inscriptions only show the voiceless ones *p*, *t* and *c* (= *k*). No *o*-sound seems to have existed in the language either.

The Etruscans had no use for the four Phoenician *s*-sounds (the sibilants *zajin*, *samekh*, *śade* and *shin*) or for the three *k*-sounds (*c*, *k*, *q*). The sibilants were consequently reduced to two during the fifth century, though their use varied geographically: in the south *śade* was used at the beginning of a word and *shin* as the genitive *s*, while in the north it was the other way round [23]. Similarly, the letter *ɣ* (*g*, used for the voiceless *k*-sound) displaced *ḳ* *k* and *q̄* *q*.

But these letters stayed in the alphabet. Even the alphabets from around 600 BC keep the 26 letters of the Marsiliana alphabet, although the inscriptions themselves never use more than 18–22 of them [24]. A parallel phenomenon can be seen in the runes, where the *ʃ* of the runic alphabet rarely and the *ḳ* never appears in any inscription that makes sense.

In the same way as the Etruscans reduced the number of letters for practical purposes, they gradually became rather economical in their use of vowels. We find for instance the Greek name *Alexandros* written *Alexantre* in Old Etruscan but *Elxsntre* in the later language – reminiscent of Phoenician consonantal writing. Similar tendencies can be seen in runic inscriptions.

The writing direction in Etruscan was as in Phoenician or early Greek, right to left or occasionally boustrophedon, rarely left to right as in classical Greek.

The oldest inscriptions have no punctuation marks but starting in the sixth century BC three or four dots may be used to divide words. This is not done consistently, however, not even in the same inscription (a similar inconsistency is found

in runic inscriptions). In the fourth century division marks of two dots appear, and in the third century a single dot is preferred.

The Etruscans introduced another novelty. As a matter of efficiency they got rid of the Phoenician-Greek letter names (*alpha, beta, gamma*, etc.) – which meant as little to them as they did to the Greeks – and referred to the letters in the way we do now: *a, be, ce, de, e* etc. – a practice we inherited from the Romans who borrowed it from the Etruscans. But in this particular the runes are in marked contrast since, as we have seen, they each have a name of their own.

THE NORTH ETRUSCAN ALPHABETS

With the gradual annexation of Etruria as part of the Roman Empire from the second quarter of the first century BC, Latin began to replace Etruscan as the language of inscribed monuments. By the middle of the first century AD the Etruscan language had completely disappeared from official documents. No one knows how long it continued to be spoken, or whether it may have lingered for some time as a sacred language, like Sumerian or Proto-Hittite. But when the Emperor Claudius (died AD 54) initiated the study of Etruscan, it was probably purely as an antiquarian pursuit.

But the Etruscan alphabet lived on in the writing systems of the other Italic peoples. Even non-Etruscans like the Alpine tribes adopted the alphabet of their influential neighbour. We must get to know these descendants of Etruscan in some detail because a number of scholars have sought to derive the runes from them. They claim to have found the birthplace of the runes in the deep valleys of the Alps.

The term “North Etruscan” covers (1) *Raetic* (Raetia, which became a Roman province in 15 BC, was approximately present-day Switzerland) with such landmarks as Bolzano and Lago di Garda (including Val Camonica) with the Magré alphabet; (2) *Celto-Liguric* or *Lepontic* (usually called the

	Etruscan	Latin		Runes	Identical symbols		
		Old	Classical		Etruscan	Runes	Latin
a	Λ Λ A A A Λ	Λ A A	A	ᚦ	ᚦ (Lepontic)	ᚦ	
b v	[β]	[β]	B	ᚷ			
g k	> ɔ	ɔ	C	<=k X=g		<	C
d	[ɔ]=d	ɔ	D	ᚹ			
e	ʌ ʌ ɛ	ʌ	E	ᚺ			
v f	ʌ ʌ=v 8=f	ʌ V H	F	ᚷ=v ᚷ=f		ᚷ	F
z	ʌ ʌ ʌ ʌ ʌ ʌ	[I]		ᚷ (X secondary)			
h e	ᚷ ᚷ ᚷ ᚷ ᚷ ᚷ	ᚷ	H	ᚷ (N secondary)	ᚷ (Bolzano)	ᚷ	H
th	ᚷ ᚷ ᚷ ᚷ ᚷ			ᚷ			
j i	ʌ	ʌ	I	ᚷ	ʌ	ʌ	ʌ
k	ʌ ʌ ʌ	ʌ	K	< (Y ʌ second)			
l	ʌ ʌ	ʌ	L	ᚷ	ʌ	ʌ	L
m	ᚷ ᚷ ᚷ ᚷ	ᚷ	M	ᚷ (M=e)	ᚷ (Magré)	ᚷ	(M)
n	ʌ ᚷ ᚷ	ʌ	N				
ks	ᚷ		X				
o	[ɔ] [ɔ] ʌ	ɔ	O	ʌ	ʌ (Noric)	ʌ	
p	ʌ ʌ	ʌ ʌ	P	ᚷ (P=w)			
sade	ᚷ ᚷ ᚷ ᚷ						
q	ʌ	ʌ ʌ	Q				
r	ʌ ʌ ʌ	ʌ	R	ʌ (P=w)		ʌ	R
s(h)	ʌ ʌ ʌ ʌ	ʌ ʌ	S	ʌ ʌ ʌ	ʌ ʌ	ʌ ʌ	S
t	ʌ ʌ ʌ ʌ	ʌ ʌ	T	ʌ	ʌ	ʌ	T
u y	ʌ ʌ ʌ	ʌ	V	ʌ ʌ	ʌ	ʌ	V
ph	ᚷ ᚷ ᚷ						
kh	ʌ ʌ						
ng				ᚷ			
w				ᚷ			
ī				ᚷ			
				independent Germanic sounds P = w X = q (gh) ᚷ = ŋ (ng) ᚷ = d ð ᚷ = th (ð)	identical forms, different sound value q = r X = t ᚷ = o ᚷ = s p = w X = q ᚷ = ng ᚷ = d		

f u t h a r k g w h n i j i p z s t b e m l n g o d

Lugano alphabet in runological circles) around the lakes of Lugano, Como and Maggiore and down on the Lombardy plain; (3) *Venetice* (including Venice); and (4) *Noric* in the Austrian province of Carinthia, where excavations at the big Roman depot in Magdalensberg have recently unearthed a few Etruscan (and a lot of Latin) inscriptions [25].

In the chart on p. 50 the various North Etruscan alphabets are displayed alongside the Old Etruscan and the runes of the Common Germanic futhork.

As possible sources for the futhork scholars have especially singled out the Sondrio and Lugano (= Lepontic) alphabets – *but in a form already influenced by the Latin alphabet*. Specifically, the Roman F, H, R and V must have been present, because everyone agrees that these are the sources of the runes \mathfrak{F} \mathfrak{H} \mathfrak{R} and \mathfrak{V} . To these we may add B (runic \mathfrak{B}), which although present in the Etruscan alphabet is not found in inscriptions. Some scholars would also include \mathfrak{K} (runic \mathfrak{K}) among the Latin loans [26].

If we compare the Etruscan letters (including Old Etruscan and the later Alpine alphabets) with the runes, we can see a good many similarities of *form* (cf. the chart p. 50). But even if we include the double-barred \mathfrak{H} from Bolzano (a secondary shape), only ten of them are identical in both form *and* sound value.

Moreover, if we look closer at these ten identical signs, we find that \mathfrak{F} is only known in Old Etruscan \mathfrak{F} comes from Lepontic (or Gallic), \mathfrak{H} from Bolzano, \mathfrak{R} from Magré, \mathfrak{V} from Noric (in Austria), and the two s-forms \mathfrak{S} and \mathfrak{Z} from Lepontic. In other words, whoever devised the runic alphabet would have had to know all these various Alpine alphabets, used by people speaking diverse tongues, and would then have had to select one letter from this one, another from that, putting his alphabet together from a variety of different sources. Our study of alphabet history has shown us how improbable such a procedure would be.

The “Etruscan theory” as an explanation of the origin of runes goes back to an essay published in 1928 by the Norwegian Celticist and runologist, Carl J.S. Marstrand. It was supported almost immediately by the Finnish scholar, Magnus Hammar-

ström, and was soon eagerly adopted in Germany by Helmut Arntz (in his rather immature *Handbuch der Runenkunde*, first published in 1935) and then by the more reliable runologist, Wolfgang Krause (who prefers however to derive a few runes from pre-runic ideographic symbols). These two German scholars were the authors of popular and influential handbooks so the theory became widely disseminated, despite devastating criticisms from von Friesen, Holger Pedersen and Fritz Askeberg. We may further note that it is the Alpine alphabets that are referred to as the source of runes in both Jensen's and Diringer's books on the alphabet, and it seems to be the prevailing theory in Italy (Pallottino: *The Etruscans*) and to some extent in France (Mossé-Musset) as well.

THE LATIN ALPHABET

In the debate on runic origins no writing system has played a more crucial role than the Roman alphabet. Whether one considers it the sole source of *all* the runes (Wimmer, Holger Pedersen) [27] or merely the model in a somewhat freer relationship (Askeberg, Moltke) [28]; whether one agrees with von Friesen's Greek hypothesis or believes with Marstrander that the Etruscan alphabet in a final Alpine phase was the true source of the futhark: no one can deny that the runes Þ ƿ ʀ and ʁ have the Latin letters B, F, H and R as their immediate pattern, altered only slightly to give the angular shapes suitable for inscription on wood.

It was presumably the Etruscans who around 600 BC passed the alphabet on to the Romans, one of many such cultural contributions made by this highly civilised people. In the chart on p. 55 the oldest Latin alphabet [29] is illustrated (with variants) alongside the Etruscan and runic series. Down to the time of Cicero (died 43 BC) it contained only 21 letters. Its derivation from Etruscan is evident from the order in which the letters occur and from their phonetic designations, *a, be, ce, de*, etc. (in contrast to *alpha, beta, gamma*, etc., in Greek),

and also from certain scribal customs in the oldest inscriptions, such as the use of *c* for both voiceless *k* and voiced *g*. (The letter *G* was not introduced until about 230 BC.)

The Romans had no use for the letters *y* (𐤅 𐤆), *th* (𐤛), *ph* (𐤑), and *kh* (𐤍𐤏). They dispensed with the first – for the time being. The second and third are thought by some to be prototypes of the Roman numerals *C* (= 100) and *CIO* (*M* = 1000). The seventh letter in the alphabet, *z* (𐤆), represented a voiced *s*, but during the fourth century BC this sibilant changed to an *r*-sound and the letter became superfluous. (Note the similarity with the rune 𐀓.) The letter *z* was reintroduced along with *y* from Greek in the reign of the Emperor Augustus (died AD 14) – as is often the case with new letters, they were placed at the end of the alphabet. The letter 𐌆 = *f*, a late addition to the Etruscan alphabet, is not found in Roman writing. Instead, the older inscriptions express the *f*-sound by *v* + *h*, as in early Greek, Etruscan and Venetic.

Then there is the problem of *B*, *D*, *O* and *x* (= *ks*). The first three exist in the Etruscan alphabet but not in the inscriptions, and *x* = *ks* is found in neither. Some scholars think the Romans borrowed these letters from Greek – as they certainly did in the case of *X* – while others believe that the Etruscan *alphabet* could have supplied *B*, *D* and *O*.

The Roman letters *P* and *R* constitute a special problem, one with a kind of parallel in the futhark. Did the Romans first use *P* (Phoenician *rosh*, Greek *ro*) for both *r* and *p*? And did they then distinguish *r* from *p* by adding a little slanting stroke to *P* (𐌱)? If so, it was in defiance of the laws of alphabet history, for we should then have expected *P* to remain *r* (as in Phoenician and Greek) and the modified 𐌱 to be used for *p*! (In fact, some people think this is what happened.) I mention this problem only because it reminds us of runic 𐌱, which formally agrees with Roman *P* but has the sound value *w*.

The oldest Latin inscriptions are variously right to left, left to right and boustrophedon (cf. note 29). Ultimately the Romans, like the Greeks, came to prefer the left to right direction, though the other way round is sometimes found, even in quite late inscriptions [30]

Let us now compare the Roman alphabet with the runes.

Working through the tables p. 55 letter by letter we find the following features:

- (1) Identity in both form and sound in eight cases

B F H I L R T V Ɓ Ʀ H | ƚ R ƚ Ɔ

- (2) Similarity in both form and sound in six cases

A C (or K) D M O S Ɔ < ƚ Ɔ Ɔ >

- (3) Similarity of form but not of sound in three cases

P M X ƚ = w ƚ = e x = g

- (4) Runic forms, unknown in Latin, in seven cases

ƚ n ≈ j ƚ i ƚ ng ƚ p ƚ z ƚ d

We have now surveyed all the alphabets that have been proposed as candidates for runic parentage. We have followed the alphabet from its beginnings around 1000 BC to its North Etruscan descendants in the Alps in the first century BC, and we have seen how, one after another, a people will adapt the borrowed alphabet to its own needs by getting rid of some letters, by changing the sound values of others, and finally by inventing new ones, usually added at the end. We also noted that the alphabet of the Etruscans contained more letters than they needed and used – perhaps they retained them to facilitate communication in writing with foreign language groups. Finally we saw how alphabets reflect societies: the Greeks, divided into numerous states, kept a variety of alphabets for several centuries, just as each of the Alpine tribes adapted the Etruscan alphabet to its own circumstances and in its own way. The stability of the Roman Empire, on the other hand, was reflected in its stable alphabet.

But the alphabets considered in detail all shared one feature: the order of the letters in the alphabet was maintained all the way from Phoenician to Latin. True, we noticed a couple –

Ethiopian and Arabic — that broke up the original order. We also found reason to dwell briefly on the Iberian alphabet, not because of its order (which we do not know) but because of its relative independence vis-à-vis its Greek-Punic source. Possibly the runes also represent an independent creation on the basis of some other alphabet.

We also discussed mixed alphabets like Lycian, Carian and Lydian, in which some 10 of the 26 letters were new formations.

To conclude our survey we might take a look at faraway Korean writing. In its last phase it offers a striking parallel to both Iberian and runes. Until the end of the seventh century AD Koreans [31] used the ideographic characters of Chinese, ill-suited to the Korean language though they were. In 692 a new script was formed on the basis of these characters which, though an improvement, did not prove successful in the long run. The result was that in 1446 King Sē-chong introduced a truly alphabetical writing system with eleven vowel signs and seventeen consonants — an ingenious script, still used virtually unmodified today, consisting of highly simplified signs freely invented on the Chinese model (cf. the Iberian letters). The runes are also very simple signs and in many cases must be free transformations of the letters of an already existing alphabet, free also in their order.

All alphabets — those we have mentioned and those we have not — have one thing in common: they are first and foremost *a means of communication*. Whatever supernatural powers may be credited with the invention of the alphabet in any given culture, *the alphabet is not per se magical*. The letters of any alphabet can be used for messages magical and un-magical, but there is no magic inherent in the letters. Many scholars (even alphabet historians [32]) have lost sight of this when dealing with runes, in spite of the fact that nothing in the nature, names, occurrence or shapes of runes distinguishes them from any other letters used among mankind.

WHICH ALPHABET IS THE TRUE SOURCE OF THE RUNES?

Since von Friesen's Greek cursive theory has been abandoned (and rightly so), we can forthwith dismiss the Greek alphabet from consideration. Phoenician writing is out of the question. That leaves only Etruscan and Latin.

It must be said at once that the situation does not look good for Etruscan. Quite apart from the fact (which everyone admits) that Etruscan could have served as a source only after absorbing a number of Latin letters (B F H R V), and quite apart from the further fact that not one but three or four variant Etruscan alphabets must be pressed into service to explain the runes' origins, it is worth repeating that about the time of the birth of Christ — when we assume the runes were also born — Etruscan writing was all but dead, a victim of the Roman alphabet's victorious advance. In other words, the later we date the origin of the runes, the further into the distance Etruscan recedes.

There is also a perfectly valid reason (but a disgraceful one, which supporters of the Etruscan theory are reluctant to discuss) why Etruscan should never have been brought into the picture in the first place. *The Etruscan theory is in fact based on a fake inscription, which turns out to be neither Etruscan nor runic.*

If one disregards a casual and undocumented reference in the work of a nineteenth-century German scholar, the Etruscan theory owes its existence, as we saw, to the Norwegian Carl J. S. Marstrander. When he wrote (1928), each of the other competing theories (Wimmer's Latin, von Friesen's Greek) could be seen to have its flaws, and he understandably cast about for a new candidate [33]. One thing that led him to Etruscan was that he got to know of a bone awl found in excavations at Maria-Saalerberg in Austria. It was dated to the second century BC and the finder thought that the inscription carved on it, read from left to right, was Etruscan.

Marstrander read the inscription from right to left and saw in it the runes m k n f s z, which he then interpreted as *m(i)k N(e)f(o) s(e)z(o)* "Nefo carved me". Even in the infancy

The fake bone awl from Maria-Saalerberg, Austria, the chief support for Carl J.S. Marstrander's Etruscan theory. Both the awl and the inscription were made in modern times. Tracing by Thora Fisker from a photograph in Marstrander 1928, p. 91.



of runology, this kind of “interpretation” should have been relegated to the world of fantasy. For one thing, it has the object doing the talking, a kind of formula that does not appear in runic inscriptions until the Middle Ages, a thousand or so years later. But we need not spend time on this odd inscription for a few years after its “discovery” it was shown to be a forgery – a small but not particularly sharp piece of museum trickery [34].

But both before and since the discovery of the fake inscription, the Etruscan theory has been subject to devastating attacks. (The most recent defence – and feeble enough at that – may be found in Wolfgang Krause’s small popular book called *Runen* published in 1970: he even introduces a newly discovered Etruscan inscription from the fifth century BC as evidence! [35]) The criticisms are based on considerations drawn from both alphabet history and cultural history [36]. Not least powerful among the arguments is the circumstance that the runic alphabet was apparently created far away from any Etruscan region and any sphere of Etruscan influence. The theory thus runs into difficulties of both time and space.

There remains, then, only one alphabet to discuss as the source of the futhark: the Latin alphabet, Roman capital letters as they appeared at the beginning of our era.

If we consider the runic alphabet in the light of what we have learned about alphabet history on the preceding pages, it is obvious that the futhark belongs with those alphabets that are relatively independent of their models. It would be fruitless to try to find a source for every single rune (something no one could do in support of any other theory, either); and instead of a “source” alphabet it is more accurate to speak of a “lending” alphabet.

The creator of the futhark showed his independence not only in the changes he made in the shapes of the borrowed letters (usually on account of the material he carved in) but also in the letters he created from scratch ($\approx j$, $\diamond ng$, $\mathfrak{L} p$, etc.) and particularly in the way he scrapped the traditional alphabet order and substituted his own: fupark etc. We shall never know why he did this. While the re-ordering of the Arabic alphabet, for example, can be explained on phonetic and formal grounds, *the order of runes in the futhark is as bewildering as the original alphabetical order of the Phoenicians.*

Although in the period when runes were created the alphabets of the Mediterranean world were stable and refined (compared to their original state), the futhark and the early runic inscriptions nevertheless betray all the primitive features we have observed in the archaic Mediterranean inscriptions (many centuries before runes were invented): uneven letter heights and irregular lines, variable direction of writing, punctuation inconsistent or absent, a name for every rune. In short, they have a thoroughly primitive quality, quite unlike the “classical” level to which Greek and Latin had long since attained.

This state of affairs is hardly comprehensible unless we assume that the runes came into being in a region relatively remote from the centres of influence of the classical alphabets [36].

It was Fritz Askeberg who in his pioneering book, *Norden och kontinenten i gammal tid* (1944), first pointed out this vital consideration: within the sphere of Roman dominance a nascent runic alphabet is an impossibility. Askeberg wanted to find the origin of the runes among the Goths on the Vistula, where the runic spear-heads (see p. 38 above) came to light.

Against this I have stressed the role of the River Rhine as the great north-south trade-route and drawn attention to the many old Danish runic inscriptions and the Norwegian spear-head from Øvre Stabu [37].

In terms of finds Denmark (Sjælland-Skåne, to be precise) is the most plausible location for the birthplace of runes.

Always independent of Rome, the Danes nevertheless maintained lively connections with this great civilisation and its trading-posts and military camps along the Rhine, as the archaeological evidence demonstrates [38]. If anyone wanted to get to know the Romans and to learn their writing system (with its obvious advantages), he had no need to travel to Rome. The Rhine region, the Netherlands and Gaul all lay close at hand, and England was there as well.

Let us conclude our survey by summarising:

(1) The presence of two i-runes shows that the futhark was created not later than the end of the second century AD. (This idea is now obsolete, as the ð-rune originally stood for ç).

95 (2) The oldest known runic inscriptions (Øvre Stabu, Ille-
rup) are dated on archaeological evidence to c. AD 200, but if
122 the inscription on the Meldorf fibula is runic – and of course
it is – then the date of our earliest inscription has to be moved
back by another 150 years, to c. AD 50. If we follow cautious
practice in alphabet history and allow one or two centuries of
as yet undiscovered finds to precede the oldest known inscrip-
tions, we arrive at a date around the birth of Christ, or perhaps
as far back as 100–150 BC, for the origin of runes. It might
seem safe to say the year 0 ± 100 (50) years.

(3) For chronological reasons the runes cannot stem from the Phoenician alphabet, and for reasons of letter-shape they cannot be derived from the Greek alphabet (particularly not Greek cursive). Derivation from Etruscan is ruled out by letter-shapes and by principles of alphabet history (cf. also point (7) below).

(4) Runes were based on the Roman capital letters of imperial times. Some ten were taken over directly, others were imitated, and some completely new signs were invented.

(5) The futhark's independence of classical alphabets is shown in its new sequence of the letters, which is as unaccountable in phonetic terms as the original alphabetical order of the Phoenicians.

(6) The oldest runic inscriptions have all the primitive characteristics observed in the early phases of the classical alphabets (several centuries before the runes came into existence): irregularity of size and line, writing direction both to right and left, boustrophedon, inconsistent or non-existent punctuation, and the fact that each rune has its individual name.

(7) Points (4)–(6) lead to the conclusion that the futhark could not have arisen in the immediate vicinity of the classical alphabets.

(8) Judging from an abundance of early inscriptions in a relatively confined area, Denmark is the most likely place for the invention of runes. They were an independent creation based on Roman writing. The inspiration could have come from the Rhineland.

HOW DID THE FUTHARK TAKE SHAPE?

As we saw, the old futhark has the following appearance (the order of runes 13–14 and 23–24 is uncertain):

ƿ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ
f u þ a r k g w h n i j p ĩ z s t b e m l n g d o

The 24-character futhark. The order of runes 13–14 and 23–24 is uncertain.

We also observed (p. 59) that these runes

ƿ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ

are direct loans or close imitations of Roman

F V D A R C or K H I S T B L

The sounds designated by the runes \mathfrak{M} \times \mathfrak{P} and \diamond , viz. *d* (or frequently *ð*, voiced *th* as in English “then”), *g* (also often a fricative, as in for example Danish *tage*), *w* and *ng*, had no correspondences in Latin (nor had *p*), and the classical Roman alphabet had no letter *j* (the rune \sim) [39]. To express the second of these sounds, *g*, the creator of the runes borrowed the Latin letter *X*, just as the Romans themselves borrowed certain Greek letters and used them for new sound values. Unless, of course, this cross-mark is the rune-inventor’s independent creation, like \mathfrak{t} the rune for *n*. After all, it is something of an insult to his intelligence to assume that he needed a model for this simple sign – in a system otherwise made up of verticals and diagonals!

We have no way of knowing why the futhark’s creator used Latin *P* for his *w* (cf. p. 58) and then designed the more complex character \mathfrak{k} for *p*. On this point I have had a laconic query from Michael Barnes, of University College London, who asks, “Isn’t the *p*-rune \mathfrak{k} \mathfrak{B} with two of the side staves moved?”, and adds, “Cf. the phonetic relationship of *p* and *b*.” Brilliant! He must certainly be right. It then becomes illuminatingly obvious that \mathfrak{k} was modelled on an existing \mathfrak{B} , in the same way as we may legitimately suppose that \mathfrak{x} \mathfrak{o} was hit upon, “designed”, after \diamond *ng* and \mathfrak{M} after \mathfrak{M} (Σ) *e* (though in these there is no “phonetic relationship” to compare). In all probability the first runic forms to be sanctioned were those that were directly copied from Roman capital letters, $\mathfrak{B} < B$, $\mathfrak{F} < F$, $\mathfrak{R} < R$, and so on. Nor shall we ever understand why he used the form of Roman *M* for runic *e* but modified it slightly to create his runic *m*. Similarity of form and sound show that the *m*-rune must have been inspired by Roman *M*. Was it because he had already fixed on *M* for *e* and was reluctant to go back on his decision?

The rune-master needed a character to represent a voiced sibilant. The corresponding sound in Latin was marked by *Z*, a letter which we may remember was not introduced until the time of the Emperor Augustus, but if he took *Z* as a rune it would have the same shape as the one he had apparently already selected to represent *i*, \mathfrak{J} , nr 14 in the series. So he had to find another sign for voiced *s* (*z*), which he then made nr

15 in the futhark. Like \times and † , it was a simple configuration, known to most primitive alphabets, namely Υ .

If Greek Ϡ is based on Phoenician \diamond , then the rune Ϡ could be based on Latin O (runes always being angular by definition). The form \diamond had already been adopted for the *ng*-rune.

This leaves only the *a*-rune ᚠ , the symbol for ν in the classical Etruscan alphabet and in most of its descendants, although in Lepontic it does occur as *a* alongside normal A-forms (see the chart on p. 50). It was Marstrander's forceful contention that the rune ᚠ could not possibly come from the A of the Roman alphabet under the Empire (but quite easily from the Λ of archaic Latin).

Against this Askeberg has argued just as vehemently that it was not only possible but in fact quite natural to derive ᚠ from A, if we bear in mind the principle on which individual runes are shaped: if there is a main stave, it must be vertical. A form like Λ or A would be abnormal in the runic alphabet. Of course, they could have made a rune for *a* without a main stave, or they could have made it with oblique lines, like the *g*-rune (ᚷ). But as Askeberg rightly insisted, if it had one stave, then it had to be vertical. And can we really think it impossible for A to have developed into ᚠ when A itself developed out of Λ (no doubt via A), i.e. in the opposite direction? Hardly, especially considering that the cursive form under the Empire was Λ . Interaction between cursive and capital scripts is a well-known phenomenon, one we shall meet again when we discuss the formation of the 16-character futhark of the Viking Age.

In other words, the futhark does not present any problems that are not also encountered in all other borrowed alphabets. Except for the *p*-rune ᚥ and the *j*-rune ᚿ there is no symbol in the futhark that is not found in one or more of the Mediterranean alphabets. Like them, it works with the simplest possible signs and combinations.

Once we have recognised that the futhark is not a slavish copy of another alphabet, then we can surely learn to live with the fact that it is, like other alphabets, a conglomeration of transfers, imitations and novelties. And it is foolish to demand that every detail in the mind of the alphabet's creator

be accounted for. This is what most runologists have done, and all they have achieved is the creation of more problems, for themselves and other people. The most complicated solution is not necessarily the right one.

WHY?

And so the runes came into being in accordance with the laws of alphabet history – as might have been expected. But why? Part of the answer is suggested by the very names used by historians and archaeologists to denote the period when the runes were first developed: the age of Imperial Rome, the Roman Iron Age – the time, that is, when Roman exports of every kind flooded into the Germanic realms. When Christ was born, the Marcomanni still made a southern wall against further Roman penetration, while to the west lay Gaul (including Belgium) which Caesar had conquered fifty years earlier. Roman trading-posts sprang up along the great rivers that formed the frontiers, with merchants often merely blazing the way for military conquest [40]. In the first century AD there was a massive export trade from the central Roman world to Scandinavia, more vigorous than to other parts of Germania. Later it was the Roman provinces that were the source of Roman influence, particularly on Denmark [41]. The great waterways – the Rhine, Maas, Scheldt, Seine – later to be valued so highly by the Northmen – not to mention the rivers of Eastern Europe – were convenient routes by which Scandinavians could acquire the cultural goods of Rome's great empire. When in a later age and for different purposes the Vikings visited Hamburg, Dorestad and Paris, they came to familiar commercial centres.

It did not take Roman and Romanised traders long to discover the lucrative northern market with its well-heeled customers and attractive wares. Finds from the succeeding centuries, of Roman wares and incredible hoards of gold (particularly in Denmark), confirm the existence of this trade [42]. In the third century the Rhineland was catering for the taste of Germanic barbarians by producing drinking vessels shaped

like horns but made in exquisite glass (civilised Romans never drank from horns) [43]!

Other products of civilisation follow in the wake of trade. Like the Iberians in their time, Germanic people began to feel in need of a system of writing. The question is: which Germanic people, or which group among them, felt this need? All talk about the priesthood needing writing for secret, magical purposes is nonsense, partly because we know nothing about a Germanic “priesthood” and partly (and more especially) because application of writing to such ends is always secondary. As we said before, writing is primarily a neutral means of communication that comes into being when it is needed, whether it serves to maintain the complex correspondence and accounts of state administration or to help a merchant keep track of his clients and stock at home and abroad.

The “scholars” of the Germanic tribes were hardly to be found among the men who stayed at home, tilling the soil, fishing and feuding, but rather among those who travelled, went abroad (with peaceful intent or not) and came into contact with other cultures. And it was precisely this group which more than any other came to need the art of writing. Just as the Phoenician alphabet in all its phonetic disarray suggests an origin among a polyglot (there are always three or four languages on the clay tablets found in the trade-centres of Asia Minor) but philologically indifferent merchant class, so too does the futhark. It did not matter what order the elements came in – as long as they were all there!

One day a stroke of providential luck will lead us to discover a Roman Iron Age bill of lading inscribed on wood – a find to match that archaeological explosion in Bergen which sent a shower of everyday runes over an astonished world – cargo lists, merchants’ tags, love letters, magic spells, and ordinary, commonplace messages. It must have been the same in the infancy of runes. Consider the Einang stone with its incom- 78
prehensible (to us) inscription: N.N. painted this rune. Consider the Tune stone, also in Norway, with its recording of an inheritance (Krause, nr 72). Consider the little box from Sten- 88
magle (Sjælland) with its simple inscription: Hagiradar made.

NOTES

- 1 Johannes Magnus 1554: Noah's flood; Joh. Peringskiöld 1699: discovered the name Magog (son of Japhet) on a Swedish rune stone; Joh. Göransson 1750: argued that runes were brought to Scandinavia c. 2000 BC by Gomer, Magog's brother; Joh. Liljegren 1832: runes a native invention on basis of stave-less runes, probably not used as phonetic signs until about AD 800; Aage Kabell 1967: derived from Greek in the sixth century BC (cf. Isaac Taylor 1879), so also Elmer Antonsen, *Festschr für Karl Schneider* 1982.
- 2 The Vadstena and Grumpan bracteates are reproduced in Krause 1966, pp. 14–17, Taf. 2–3, where the Motala replica of the Vadstena piece is also discussed.
- 3 See e.g. Jansson, *Runinskrifter i Sverige*, 1976, p. 29; here called the "stave-less runes". English Edition 1962.
- 4 E. Moltke, *Tømrer-runer*, ÅrbOldk. 1963, pp. 151 ff.
- 5 Aslak Liestøl, *Runer fra Bryggen*, Viking 1963, pp. 5 ff.
- 6 Else Ebel, *Die Terminologie der Runentechnik*, 1963.
- 6a Cf. Ulla og Vitus Nielsen og Erik Moltke, *Pikhammeren, kan man også skrive med den?*, hikuin 6, 1980, pp. 7 ff.
- 7 On the sound values of the two i-runes see e.g. Krause, *Die Sprache der urn. Run.*, 12, 2, Ingrid Sanness Johnsen, *Arkiv f. nord. Fil.* 89, 1974, pp. 33 ff., and Ottar Grønvik, *Tunesteinen*, 1981, pp. 29 ff.
- 8 Our oldest source of rune names is the *Codex Leidensis*, a manuscript written at the beginning of the tenth century but derived from older originals. Here the l-rune is named *laukr* (in runes) and *laucr* (in Roman letters). This word – ON *laukr*, Danish *løg* "onion" (cognate with English *leek*) – is assumed by Krause to be the original name of the l-rune, in spite of the fact that all other sources have *logr* "water" (*Nachr. der Akad. der Wiss. in Göttingen. Phil.-Hist. Kl.* 1946/47, pp. 60 ff.). Krause's argument is not convincing, partly because it depends on his view that the rune names had "cult-magical" import.
- 9 All discussed by Krause 1966. – A clay spindle whorl with a runic inscription was found in a fourth-century grave in Rumania in 1968 (see Krause, *ZVergl. Sprachforschung* 83, 1969, pp. 153 ff.).
- 10 J.A. Bundgård disagrees. He thinks the only tenable explanation is that all these nuances were derived directly from a single system of writing which was not based on a single language (see reference in note 13).
- 11 I disregard the fact that a script using letters was in existence already in cuneiform, so-called Ugaritic from North Syria preserved on tablets dated on archaeological grounds to c. 1300 BC. Its alphabet had the same order as the Phoenician.
- 12 Gutenberg really made the same discovery when, c. 1440, he cut out the individual letter types from his blocks and began to "compose"

- them according to need. He did not know that a Chinese craftsman had made the same discovery 500 years earlier.
- 12a The author wants to stress that this truthful example is composed by the translator.
- 13 In his important article, Why did the art of writing spread to the West? (in *Analecta Romana Instituti Danici* III, 1965), J.A. Bundgård argues that the art of writing is not disseminated by representatives of literature, art or religion but by men engaged in commerce. This is precisely the same conclusion as I have come to in the case of runes.
- 14 Hans Jensen, *Die Schrift*, p. 307.
- 15 *ibid.*, p. 264.
- 16 A detailed introduction to the problems will be found in J. Maluquer de Motes, *Epigrafia prelatina de la peninsula Iberica*, 1968 – dedicated to Manuel Gómez Moreno who in 1923 finally succeeded in deciphering the Iberian scripts. I am grateful to the late (Erling) Fernando Hoffmeyer, Instituto de estudios sobre armas antiguas, Spain, for referring me to this book.
- 17 von Friesen's theory was supported, doubtless for the last time, by Gunnar Ekholm, *Kragehulplattan. Ett obeaktat rundokument*, *Arkiv f. nord. Fil.* 74, 1959, pp. 112–14.
- 18 Aage Kabell, *Periculum Runicum*, *NoTSpr.* 1967, pp. 94 ff.
- 19 So J.A. Bundgård, *op.cit.* in note 13.
- 20 So Franz Blatt, Hans Jensen and others. For contrary views see e.g. M. Pallottino, whose work is doubtless most easily consulted in *The Etruscans*, published in Pelican Books in 1955.
- 21 Reproduced by J.A. Bundgård (cf. note 13).
- 22 See the figure given by J.A. Bundgård, *loc. cit.* Some scholars consider this alphabet to be a Greek variant.
- 23 In reality two, viz. *śade* and *sigma*; but they were never used in the same place. Their use was geographically determined.
- 24 According to J.A. Bundgård (cf. note 13), the Phoenician alphabet had so many characters because it was not only intended for vernacular use but also for writing other languages (cf. pp. 27, 38).
- 25 Carinthia was a Roman trading-post in Noricum, which was occupied by the Romans in 15 BC but which had been established long before (c. 120 BC) by agreement with the local ruler; see Rudolf Egger, *Die Stadt auf dem Magdalensberg, ein Grosshandelsplatz, Carinthia* 1959, 1961.
- 26 Marstrander 1928, p. 87. – According to Blatt, *Alfabetet*, the Latin letters would have had to be adopted in the period 181–90 BC: “after that time the Roman alphabet had emerged as the decisive victor.”
- 27 Wimmer, *ÅrbOldk.* 1874, 1887; Holger Pedersen, *ÅrbOldk.* 1923.
- 28 Fritz Askeberg 1944; Erik Moltke 1951.
- 29 The oldest inscription with Latin letters is the so-called “black

Forum stone", found in the Forum Romanum in Rome, dated not earlier than c. 500 BC. The writing is here carved in boustrophedon sequence.

- 30 A.J. Pfiffig, *Die etruskische Sprache*, 1969, p. 22.
- 31 Jensen, p. 197.
- 32 Jensen, Blatt.
- 33 Askeberg (p. 47) thinks another impetus may have been the form of the a-rune, ƿ, which Marstrander refused to derive from A. — Something else which certainly contributed to the popularity of the Etruscan theory was the existence of a Germanic proper name (first recognised as such by Marstrander) on a helmet in a deposit find in Negau: harigasti tei V A III IL. Rudolf Egger (*Anz. der phil.-hist. Kl. der Österreich. Akad. der Wiss.*, Jahrg. 1959, nr 5, p. 84) expands and translates it: [*helmet of*] *Harigastus, son of Teus, "v(exillarii) [or v(exillationis)] a(larum) III Il(lyricarum)"* — i.e. *standard-bearer [or veteran] of the Third Illyrian "ala"*. Egger interprets the i-endings of the two names as Latin genitives and he also shows that two of the letters, s and l, are cursive in form, something which supports P. Reinecke's dating of the helmet to the time of Augustus (more precisely 6–9 AD — Egger p. 82). It is however difficult to understand what significance for runic origins can be attached to the fact that a Germanic tribesman among Roman auxiliary troops had his name written on his helmet in Etruscan letters (it is not as if we know he wrote his name himself). It is more important — if the dating holds — that the inscription demonstrates that the Etruscan (specifically the Noric) alphabet was in use so late.
- 34 Cf. Askeberg, pp. 67 f. A different but hardly credible explanation in Kabell, *Periculum Runicum*, NoTSpr. 1967, p. 97, note 34.
- 35 Quite apart from the difficulty of comprehending exactly what support for the Etruscan theory Krause wishes to find in this ancient inscription, one must note that the sketch of the letters given by him is strongly "normalised". This is clearly not Krause's responsibility because he was quite blind at the time of its publication. A reliable reproduction, with discussion by J. Whatmough, is found in *Anz. f. Schweiz. Altertumskunde* 40, 1938, p. 121.
- 36 See most recently Askeberg, pp. 44 ff. — Excellent surveys of the various theories of the origin of the runes are in Krause, *Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen*, 202 Jahrg., 1940, pp. 181 ff. (*Zum Stand der Runenforschung*), and in Kabell, *Periculum Runicum*, NoTSpr. 1967, pp. 94 ff.
- 37 E. Moltke, *Er runeskriften opstået i Danmark?*, Nationalmuseets Arbejdsmark 1951, pp. 54 ff.
- 38 E.g. at Kitnæs and "Dankirk", see Elisabeth Munksgaard, *Nationalmuseets Arbejdsmark* 1966, pp. 17 ff., Elise Thorvildsen, *ibid.*, 1972, pp. 59 f.
- 39 The semi-vowel j was introduced in the Roman alphabet by the

sixteenth-century French philosopher and grammarian, Pierre Ramée (Petrus Ramus).

- 40 Roman trading-posts in the townships of unconquered Gaul are already mentioned by Caesar (Bell. gall. VII, 42, 53).
- 41 R. Wołagiewicz, Der Zufluss römischer Importe in das Gebiet nördlich der mittleren Donau in der älteren Kaiserzeit, *Zeitschr. f. Archäologie* 4, 1970, pp. 222–49; cf. Ulla Lund Hansen, *ÅrbOldk.* 1971, pp. 102 f.
- 42 See Elisabeth Munksgaard, reference in note 38.
- 43 E. Moltke, *Guldhornsgåder*, *ÅrbOldk.* 1972 (publ. 1974), p. 147.

WORKS ON ALPHABET HISTORY

Detailed bibliography will be found in e.g. D. Diringer, *Writing*, 1962, and idem, *The Alphabet I-II*, third revised edition, 1968. Reference may also be made to the popular account in K.G. Irwin, *The romance of writing*, 1956.



Torsbjerg sword-chape, South Jutland. 4.6 x 5.1 cm. — The side with Wulpupewar, doubtless the name of the owner.

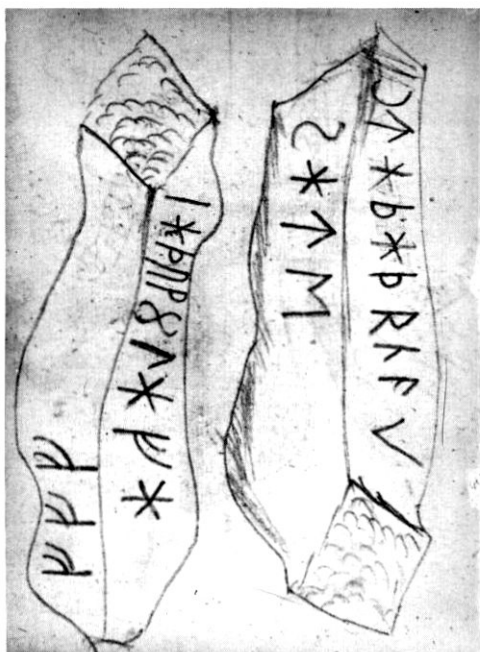
Part 2: The inscriptions

Period 1. The Roman Iron Age and the Migration Age

From the birth of Christ to the seventh century.
Primitive Norse

Fifteen hundred years is a long time and it is not surprising that the language and contents of runic inscriptions show large changes through the centuries. But even within each major span, the Roman Iron Age, the Viking Age and the medieval period, great differences can be seen.

On the whole we can say that each period is represented by two sorts of inscriptions: those intended to reveal and those intended to conceal, or briefly, narrative inscriptions and magical inscriptions. There are many more of the latter kind in the first and last of our periods (though that may have some-



†Gummarp stone, Blekinge. It was about 60 cm in length. – Drawing by Jon Skonvig, the draughtsman employed by Ole Worm. The lettering says that Hådulv placed three staves fff. The f-rune's name was *fé* = wealth. The only way to take the inscription seems to be as (fertility) magic with the three f-runes as ideographs.

thing to do with the accidents of our runic finds), but it is possible that in the Roman Iron Age and Migration Age magic was religion, or a large part of it: in the middle ages it was certainly superstition and devilry and stank in the nostrils of good churchmen. All the same, there is evidence that clerics and monks also dabbled in runic sorcery — and not always under the guise of “white magic”. And it was not until the middle ages that runes came sometimes to be regarded as inherently magic symbols. A charm inscribed in runes had greater power than the same formula written in ordinary letters — so they thought.

In their dual employment, for narrative or magic, runes do not differ from any other kind of alphabet. The dual purpose follows inevitably from the nature of letters (and runes).

People who had not mastered the art of writing must have credited it with a more than natural potency when it enabled human beings to communicate without being in each other's company, perhaps indeed hundreds of miles apart. In Gothic the word *rune* actually means “secret”, and because of this and a few evidently magical inscriptions earlier scholars (and one or two who are not dead yet) fostered the idea that runes did constitute a secret alphabet, created for magical purposes. We have seen that this notion is at odds with the laws by which alphabets develop, and neither is it in fact supported by the word “rune” itself — the term most commonly used to designate the Germanic script. Finns borrowed words from Germanic many centuries ago and Finnish is an important source of knowledge about Primitive Norse. There we find the word “rune” means “song”. We could cautiously confess that we do not know what the term meant two thousand years ago: but it may well seem probable that Elof Hellquist (*Svensk etymologisk ordbok*) was on the right track when he derived it from an onomatopœic root, *ru*, meaning to “make a sound”. Runes are symbols that “make a sound” — they talk. The sense of “secret”, as in Gothic, must be secondary. On consideration, the suggestion that the inventor of the futhark gave a name meaning “secret” to the alphabet he had expressly created to enable him and his contemporaries to communicate is bound to appear pretty daft.

The *Einang stone*, erected on a burial place from c. 300 AD in the Valdres mountains in Norway, has the word “rune” but in the singular – so it probably means the whole piece of runic writing. The Einang “rune” goes like this (the dead man is not named):

[ek gu]dagastir runo faihido [1]

[I Gu]d gæst painted the rune (i.e. the inscription)

The Swedish *Noleby stone* is a good deal younger and it too has the word in the singular, but the writer here tells us who invented runes in the first place:

runo fahi raginakudo (= *raginakundo*)

The rune I paint, from ruling powers derived

Of course, runes were an illustrious gift from the gods – not an idea confined to the North by any means. The Egyptians attributed the discovery of writing to Thot or Isis and called their hieroglyphs *mdw-ntr*, speech of the gods. The Babylonians looked on Nebo, son of the god of fate, Marduk, as the inventor of writing; the Greeks ascribed it to Hermes and other divinities, the Romans to Mercury, the Jews to Moses – and so on.

*76 The word *stave* is used of runes. It was in the inscription on the †*Gummarp stone*, transported from Blekinge to Copenhagen but only to perish in that city’s great fire of 1728. Its transitional runes, which date it to the seventh century, say:

Hådulv placed three staves fff

The last three runes are to be taken as ideographs.

Before embarking on the corpus we should say a word or two on the method of writing [2]. We find that it is sometimes possible to deduce from the verb used whether the rune-writer and the rune-master – i.e. the author of the inscription – were the same man or whether the writer was merely following a copy. We have met two verbs in the inscriptions

just cited: Gudgæst *painted*, Hådulv *placed*. The first of these occurs no less than seven times in Primitive Norse inscriptions (including two in Norway and one in Sweden). The verbs *wurkian* (work, perform, make) and *writan* (scratch, write) are each found in three inscriptions, “placed”, “carved” and “cut” in one each.

Set or place is a non-committal verb. The verb *wurkian*, make, is used with runes as its object on the Tjurkö bracteate 119 and doubtless on the Norwegian Tune stone too; it has no object in the Sölvesborg inscription, Blekinge [3]. In the latter 157 two we can not be certain whether it had its later Norse meaning of compose (usual for making verse) or whether it referred only to work involved in producing the inscription. But on the Tjurkö bracteate it must mean compose – unless one is prepared to believe that this bracteate-maker differed from all his colleagues and was actually capable of writing in runes. The fact that *wurkian* does occur in bracteate inscriptions as a parallel to *faihian* ought to confirm a sense of compose for it.

One may conjecture that *writan* was the original verb used to denote the incising or scratching of runes, runic writing. It cannot tell us what the material was that was thus scratched – wood or metal. We find the substantive *wraita* on the Norwegian Reistad stone, where a man named Wokr announces that he undertook the *wraita*, the writing.

We are not to take *faihian*, to paint or colour, to mean that someone is patting himself on the back for picking out in red runes carved by somebody else: partly because that would not seem much of an achievement and partly because the same verb is used in inscriptions on metal objects (e.g. the Åsum 114 bracteate). Rather it signifies that a man familiar with runes set down the inscription in paint, on a piece of stick or bark for example, to provide a copy for an illiterate craftsman to follow [4]. When used on metal objects the two woodworking verbs, *talgian* (shape, smooth) and *skeran* (cut), must have a similar implication. That later on they could be adopted to signify the actual work of carving is another matter. *Ørsted* 420 *church* on Fyn has a medieval ashlar with a relief of Samson and the lion and an inscription which says:

æskil i karpi skar samson han tarab tiur
Eskil of Gård carved Samson: he slew the beast

Here there can be no doubt that Eskil was the stone-mason and himself carved the relief on the hard granite. And when
156 two of our oldest Viking Age stones, at *Helnæs* and *Flemløse* on Fyn, end their messages with

ąuair faþi – Åver painted

we may conclude that Åver both painted and cut the runes.

In trying to understand a runic inscription it is important to be able to decide whether the carver was illiterate or not: if he was, his text is bound to be a copy and there is no end to the errors and omissions it may contain. The bracteates and Sven Estridsson's coins with runic legends amply demonstrate this. It will be obvious that when, for instance, ʏ can become ʦ and vice versa, ʦ can become ʏ and so on, and quite non-runic characters can be introduced, a wealth of enchanting possibility is open to the scholar who does not recognise the circumstances and who insists on attempting to interpret or elucidate the inscriptions. How many remarkable grammatical forms – often smoothly glossed as “archaisms” – have been presented to the world on the basis of illiterate rune-writers' slovenly habits!

It was noted above that the first Danish rune stone was not put up until Period 1 was nearly over, while both Norway and Sweden have inscribed stones from early in the Period (cf. Einang). We do not know whether inscriptions on wood accompanied graves (the Einang stone stood on a burial mound), but we may recall what Ibn Fadlan the Arab – as late as the tenth century, it is true – said of the Rus, men of Scandinavian origin whom he met in Russia: they set up a wooden pole on the burial mound, on which they wrote the name of the dead man and the name of his king. The last point may not sound very likely, but even so we cannot dismiss the possibility out of hand that, while inhumation was practised, wooden memorials may have existed.

OBJECTS

Narrative inscriptions show variety because they occur on so many different kinds of objects. As we might expect, they often contain the name of the owner or maker. The maker's name is known on one of our most notable and precious treasures, the *golden horn* which Jerk Lassen, a South Jutland farm labourer, dug up in 1734 at *Gallehus* near Tønder – not far from the place where Kirsten Svendsdatter had found the first (uninscribed) horn in 1639. These splendid pieces, richly decorated with a great variety of pictures, are dated by archaeologists to the fifth century – but they were stolen and melted down in 1802, so we only know them in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century drawings. The 1734 horn had this inscription: *82

ekhlewagastir : holtijar : horna : tawido :
I Lægæst, son of Holte, made the horn

No Danish runic monuments have attracted as much sensible comment as the golden horns (which undoubtedly made an original pair), and no Danish runic monuments have been the subject of so much learned and unlearned nonsense either. They have been classified as horns to blow and horns to drink from, horns that give a seasonal calendar and horns that mark solar eclipses. Their Nordic origin has been denied, they have been made spiral, the figures on the top ring of the 1639 specimen have been “read” as phonetic symbols, and there is no end to the explanations offered of the multitude of pictures, figures punched in and soldered on the red flanks of the horns. Dazzled by their splendour and the value of their precious metal, people have claimed that they must be temple treasure (who knows any temples from that age?) and Lægæst of course cannot be a “common” goldsmith, he must have been a temple priest. Naturally, the simple inscription cannot be mere prose either – it is sublime poetry and infused with magic into the bargain: number magic and penny-plain magic and twopence-coloured magic and whatever else you fancy. This is just a small selection of all the absurdities uttered on the subject of

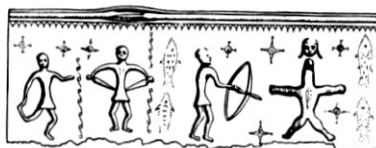
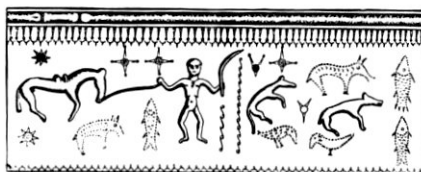
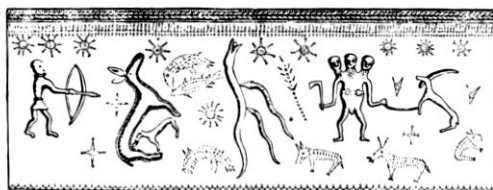


†Gallehus gold horn 1 South Jutland. This long golden horn, without runes, was discovered in 1639. The engraving is from Ole Worm's book, *De aureo cornu*, of 1641, and was probably executed by Simon de Pas. The horn (made in two layers) measured, according to Worm, two feet five inches (71.5 cm) along the outer side, had a volume of two and a half "sextaries" (1.35 litres), weighed 99 ounces and 2 drachms (2.72 kg).

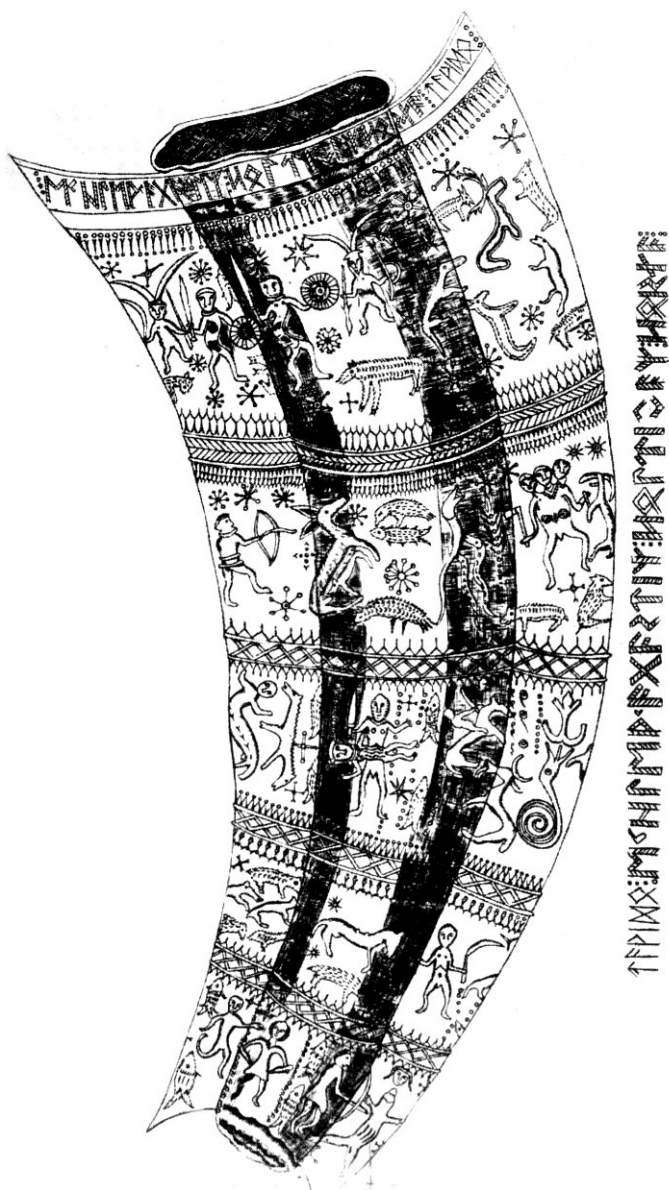
The 1639 golden horn from Gallehus (without runes), South Jutland. A copy in the National Museum, Copenhagen, photographed from the same angle as represented in the engraving reproduced on p. 82 in order to demonstrate that the horns (disregarding the inaccuracies of the replica) have the same *shape* — described by Worm as *rotundum et incurvum* — cylindrical and curved (like a sausage).



the poor horns and their poor maker, Lægæst. What can we say we know about them then? We know they were made in Denmark because Lægæst, son of Holte, writes in Nordic runes and in a Nordic (or North Germanic) language and tells us that he made the 1734 horn (just as Hagråd made the Stenmagle box). We know the horns were not spiral-shaped because when Ole Worm (1588–1654) described the 1639 horn he said expressly that it was *rotundum et incurvum* “cylindrical and curved” — like a sausage, that is — and that incontestably establishes their shape [4a]. We know too that the inscription is an ordinary, prosaic maker’s formula in a style characteristic of the Primitive Norse runic period, when the craftsman said either “I, N.N., made this” or put it in the third person, “N.N. made this” (cf. the Stenmagle inscription once more).



- 82 †Gallehus gold horn 2, South Jutland. Jochum Pauli's woodcut of the horn found in 1734, accompanying his contemporary description of it. Of the three extant drawings of the figures on the horns this is the only one in which the artist attempted to imitate what he regarded as the "barbaric" style of the period. Even so, he has regularised and made



everything as neat as seemed defensible. This is especially true of his reproduction of the runes: cf. Krysing's sketch.

†Gallehus gold horn 2, South Jutland. A drawing by Georg Krysing in his book, *Cornu Aurei Typus*, published in 1734. Its value lies chiefly in the artist's careful attempt to reproduce the runic writing.

82

†TAWIDO:EKHL EW AGASTIR:HO LTIJAR:HORNA:

tawido:ekhl ew agastir:hol tija r:horna:

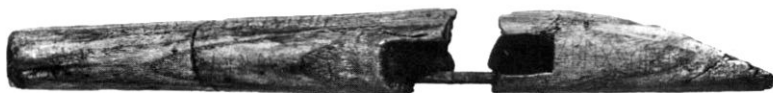
†Gallehus gold horn 2, South Jutland. Georg Krysing's reproduction of the inscription. Compare it with the more standardised version by Jochum Paulli and notice how its irregular hatching accords better with Paulli's description of the rune-engraver's unsteady hand than Paulli's own illustration does. Not that we should think that the hatching is accurate to the last detail. Krysing's careful approach is also evident from his reproduction of an accidental (or Lægæst's mistaken?) stroke on the left side of the first rune – it is meant to be \mathfrak{T} . Note also the little sign like a k-rune after w and *five* dots after horna, where Paulli “normalises” to four.

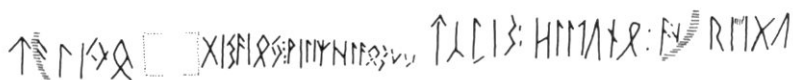
There is no magic in the “I” formula and no metre in the sentence: when a man whose name began with *h* was the son of a man whose name began with *h* and made an object whose everyday name began with *h*, alliteration was unavoidable.

Did Lægæst know runes himself or was he given letters to copy by his patron or his “Erilar”? Lægæst was probably incapable of reading what he wrote. Consider what Jochum R. Paulli, the first man to describe the 1734 horn, says of the writing: “The characters are ... engraved as if with a burin; that the man who engraved them did not have a steady hand... is more readily seen on the horn itself than it has been possible to show on the drawing.” Lægæst was a goldsmith and an expert in his craft; but he knew no more about runes than all the other goldsmiths who did their bit to botch so many inscriptions on bracteates, ornaments and weapons [5].

No acceptable elucidation has so far been offered of the pictures in their totality (religious scenes? – a ceremonial with a procession, maskers and mummers, may come nearest the mark?). But if we look at the individual motifs, we find many of them repeated on ornaments and other objects scattered far and wide over the Germanic world, particularly on the so-called *terra sigillata*.

Lægæst's name is a compound of two elements that make good sense in combination: the guest who seeks shelter (the





Stenmagle box, Sjælland. Inscribed: Hagråd made. The inscription is up- 88
 side down on the box but is here turned the right way. The box was
 empty when it was found in the bog, but a corresponding Norwegian box
 contained such bits and pieces as a bronze sewing needle, a fragment of
 gold for use as currency and a bit of a silver mount. This box is 17 cm
 long, 5 cm wide and 5 cm deep.

Vimose plane, Fyn. C. 30 cm long. The top is shown. Only the word 89
 talijo, plane, can be confidently interpreted. Dated archaeologically to
 c. AD 200. — Runes from the top and side: from a tracing by Elna
 Møller.



- 89 Illerup plane, North Jutland. C. 22 cm. Only half of it has so far been found. Photo: Lennart Larsen.



- 89 Illerup plane, North Jutland. Height of runes c. 2 cm. The inscription. Note the k-rune, with the point upwards, between the two last vertical strokes; the broad furrows above the k-rune are fortuitous scratch marks. Photo: Lennart Larsen.

first element *hlewa-* is the same as English “lee”). We find a comparable *Saligastir* on a Swedish stone (Berga): the guest received in a hall (ON *salr*). We may leave Lægæst there.

- *87 A little wooden box with a sliding lid found in a bog in *Stenmagle* parish in 1947 [6] has this inscription as its only adornment:

hagiradar ; tawide ; [7] – Hagråd made

This inscription put an end to years of discussion about the meaning of the verb on the Gallehus horn, and simultaneously proved quite inexorably that at about the time the golden

horns were manufactured, or perhaps a little earlier, it was possible to use runes “from ruling powers derived” to inscribe a small, simple and commonplace note on a small, simple and commonplace object – which Hagråd had perhaps made for his girlfriend. *Hagiradar* is also a meaningful name: one who gives skilful advice.

A number of rune-inscribed objects and weapons came to light in the four great “sacrificial” bogs of Vimose and Kragehul on Fyn and Torsbjerg and Nydam in South Jutland both before and during the great excavations in them in the mid-nineteenth century. They include the *Vimose plane*, which *87 archaeologists now date c. AD 200. Inscriptions are on the top and one side of it, the latter much damaged:

A (top) talijo | gisaioj : wilir (:) hlao(s)??

B (side) tk(bi)s : hleuno : an? : r(e)gu

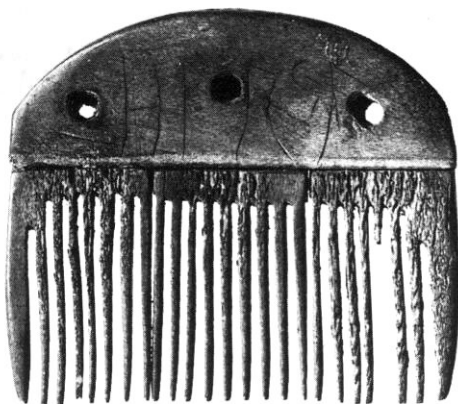
The only word that can be understood in these sequences is the one standing on its own, *talijo*, which means *plane*. It ought to have been spelt *talgijo*, as we can see from the form of the corresponding verb on the *Nøvling fibula*, discovered in 1963: *124

bidawarijar talgidai – Bidvar carved (the runes)

Whether the carpenter who owned the Vimose plane and furnished it with runes muddled the spelling or whether our stupidity is to blame is hard to say: but the totally meaningless *tkbis* speaks in the woodworker’s favour. One thing that is quite certain, however, is that the Nøvling jeweller was illiterate. 129 He engraved his runes following a copy in which the verb looked like this: ᚖᚦ ᚖ ᚦ | ᚦᚦ | ᚦᚦ, *talgide* (with the grammatically correct final *-e* for the third person singular – cf. *Stenmagle tawide*). Out of this the dunderhead made ᚖᚦ ᚖ ᚦ | ᚦᚦ | (with ᚦ | for ᚦ at the end) – the misreading is so elementary that there is absolutely no need to start speculating on the possibility of an “archaic” verbal form.

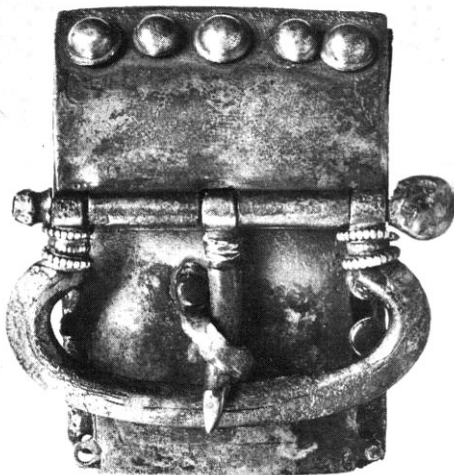
Fragments of a second *plane* were excavated in *Illerup bog* 88 in 1981 and eight runes were discovered on them in the cleansing process:

91



Vimose comb, Fyn. 5.6 × 4.9 cm. The runes give the man's name, Harja — probably the owner.

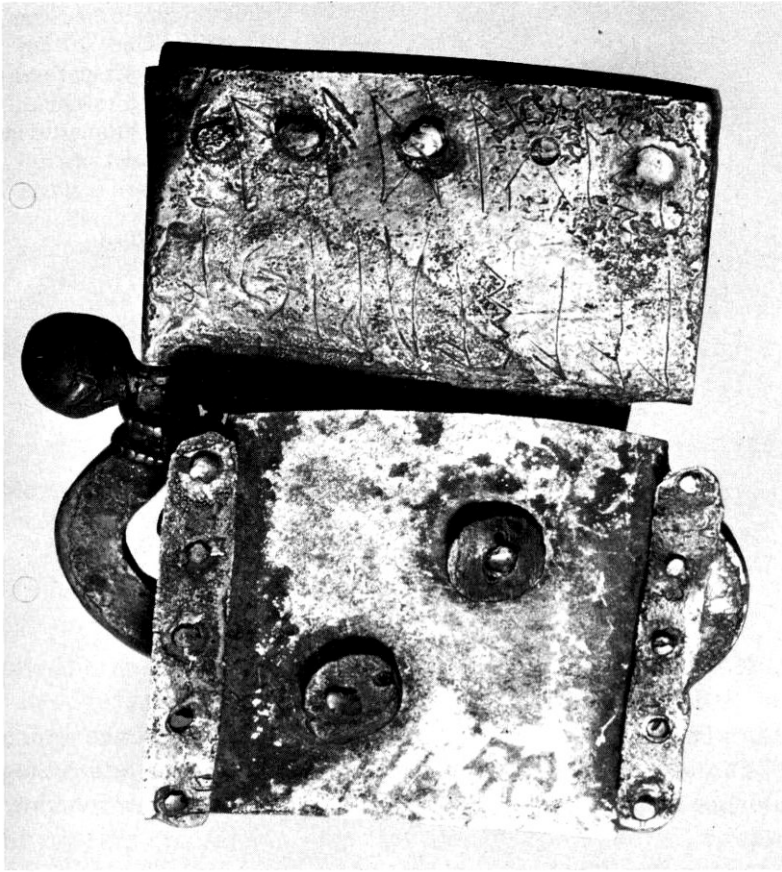
92



Vimose buckle, Fyn. Natural size. Part of horse trappings, belonging to the strap which kept the saddle horizontal (cf. Skalk 1979, nr 4, p. 14).

ᚠ ᚱ | ᚠ ᚠ | ᚱ |
a f i(l)a i k i

Assuming some runes were lost along with the rest of the plane, we could complete the inscription as a man's name: afilaiki[ᚱ] (cf. Hadulaikar, Kjøllevik, Norway).



Vimose buckle, Fyn. Showing the back (4×2.9 cm) with the inscription 92
 aadagasu laasauwija, the meaning of which is unexplained. Since the
 runes were hidden, they were doubtless meant to give magic protection,
 like the runes on the Torsbjerg shield-boss which also give no plain sense.
 Did they ever have an intelligible meaning or were they the careless
 copies of a swindling metal-worker? The latter seems to be the case with
 many of the bracteate inscriptions.

Fortunately the inscription on the *Vimose comb* is as easy *90
 to understand as that on the Vimose plane is difficult.

It reads harja,

i.e. *Harja*, a man's name, doubtless the owner's.



Hide-scraper from Slemminge, Lolland. 20 cm long. — The scraper was spat out of a machine making peat briquettes in 1943. The brief inscription consists of a single word (see the detail illustrated), but its meaning is uncertain.

- 90 But with the *Vimose* buckle we are in deep water once again. The runes are easy to read but so far no convincing interpretation has been offered of them. The two lines are in boustrophedon order:

aadagasu | laasauwija

It has been suggested that aasauwija should be read *a(n)sauwija* and interpreted: I dedicate to the god (ON *áss*); others have wanted to find the names *A(n)dag* and *A(n)sula* in the



- 93 Kragehul knife-haft, Fyn. 2.4 × 1.5 cm. Tracing of the runes *uma þ bera*, read from right to left; remnant of a personal name in *-bera*.



Slemminge hide-scraper, Lolland. The runes are read as *witrng*. Is that the name of the scraper or the owner? *92

inscription. All this is reminiscent of the guessing games earlier runologists used to play with bracteate inscriptions. When we come to them, we shall be able to demonstrate that most goldsmiths were not familiar with runes and did no more than copy something put in front of them. Not many were capable of copying accurately — we have already come across a couple of errors. The twice-written double *a* on the Vimose buckle is enough to make one suspicious of its accuracy as a copy; and as for the interpretation, *wija* could as well be the last element in a compound name as a form of *wihian*, to dedicate.

From the *Kragehul bog* we have the end of a bone *knife-haft*, rune-inscribed but with only the name or name-element *Bera* intelligible. The runes read right to left. They are on two sides of the haft, cut with double strokes as on the 1734 gold horn, but without hatching: *92

... uma + bera || ... ?(a)u

The last inscription in this group — at present — is a *hide-scraper* from *Slemminge* on Lolland. It is made of reindeer

antler and was coughed up by a machine making peat-briquettes in 1943. The inscription looks like this:

ᑭ | ᑭ ᑭ ᑭ

130 The normalised Primitive Norse futhark would give the last rune the value *ng* (it also occurs on a *bronze figure* found at *Køng* on Fyn, with only two runes preserved . . . ᑭ ᑭ, i.e. ngo or ong). That would make the Slemminge runes read:

witrng

118 The trouble with this is that this Primitive Norse word then appears with no case-ending which (disregarding alawin and (j)alawid on the Skodborg bracteate) would be unique, since all the other “vocatives” without endings in the corpus owe their existence to the defective state of their inscriptions. The only way out of the difficulty is to assume that *ng* stands for its
139 full runic name *ingwar*, just as the *j*-rune on the Stentoften stone stands for its full name, *jara*. We thus arrive at

witring(w)ar

89 468 – either the name of the scraper (the name of the tool is found on the Vimose plane and on the glove-needles from Lund and
470 388 Ålborg) [8] or the name of the owner (but cf. *uitrik*, Sandby 3,
388 and *uitrint*, Tillitse stone = emblazing). Another possibility – but is it plausible? – is that the *ng*-rune is an error for the *o*-rune and in that case we don’t know if it is a feminine or a masculine name, *witro*(!).

Illerup mount for a shield-handle 1 (bronze), North Jutland. Height of runes c. 2 cm. Inscriptions on fibulas (e.g. Meldorf, Værløse, Gårdlösa) and bracteates (e.g. Femø – Åsum) sometimes stop in the middle of a word, because the goldsmiths were illiterate and only “wrote” as many of the “funny” signs as there was room for. But this inscription is notable because the maker takes care to get the last rune of the name in, even though it has to be incised at right angles to the other runes.



121
123 128
114

WEAPONS

One of the oldest inscriptions on a weapon of any kind is on a *bronze mount* that made part of a shield-grip, found in *Illerup bog*, North Jutland, in 1976. It corresponds closely to the one found with the rune-inscribed lance-head in the Mos grave on Gotland. According to the archaeological dating (see Kuml 1977), it cannot be from much later than AD 200. That makes it contemporary with or perhaps rather older than the lance-head from Øvre Stabu in Norway (inscribed *raunijar*), which is reckoned to be from the second half of the second century (Krause, p. 76). The Illerup inscription reads

swart | a, probably the owner's name, Black.

Illerup lance-heads 1-2. A second rune find was made in Illerup bog in 1980, two finely shaped lance-heads of the so-called Vennolum type (Kuml 1975, p. 126) with zig-zag ornament around the runes. They were found each in separate disposal

*96 *97



Illerup lance-head 2, North Jutland. C. 29.4 cm. An elegant masterpiece with ornament and runes. Photo: Lennart Larsen.

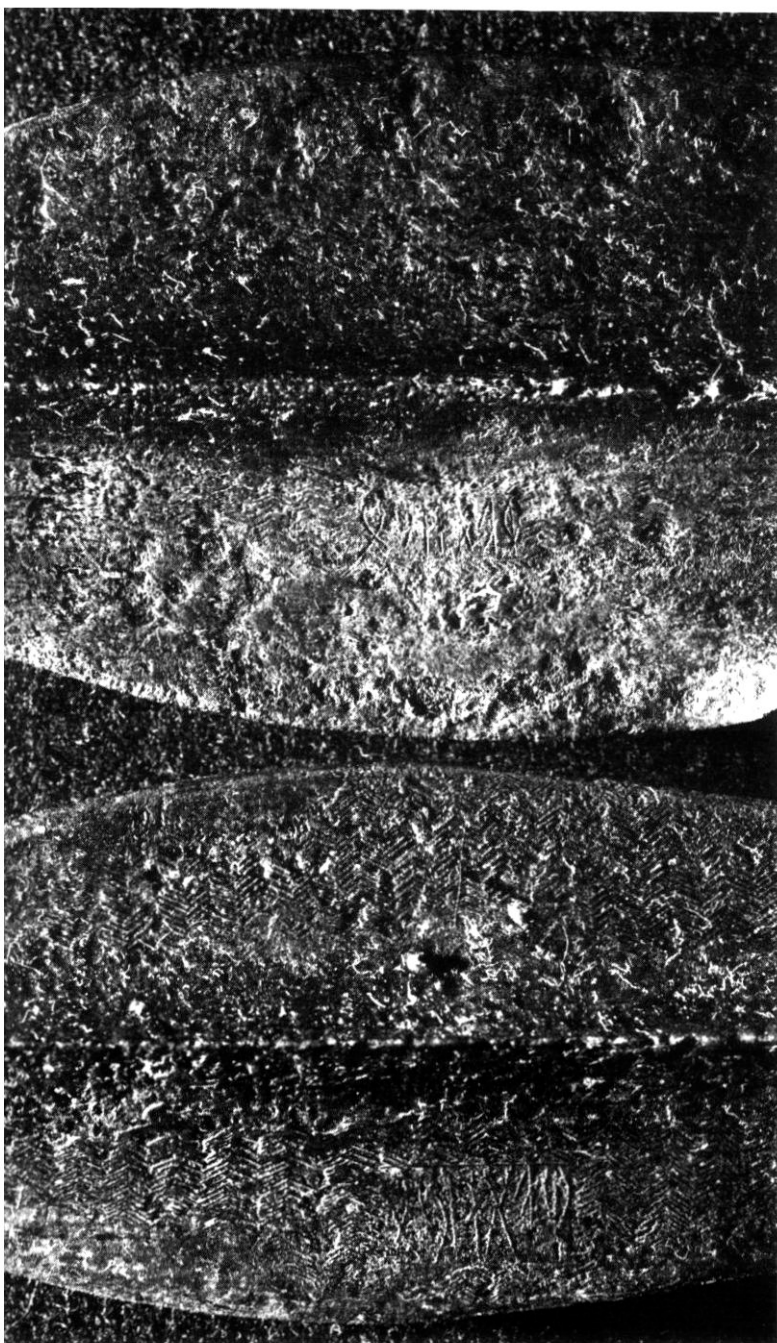
heaps about 30 m. apart, and from the context can be dated to c. AD 200. A peculiar thing is that both blades have the same inscription:

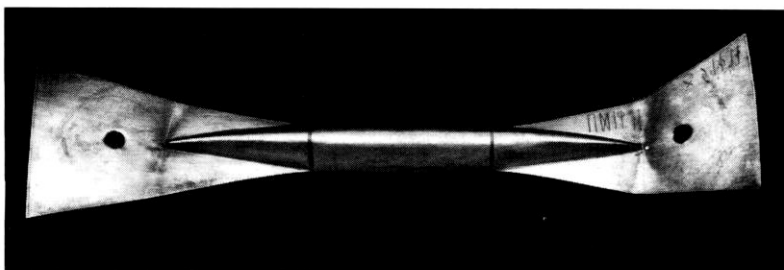
o j i n g a r

— a man's name; but still more peculiar is the fact that while one of them was inscribed with incised runes in normal fashion, the inscription on the other was in (raised) relief — i. e. it had been made with a stamp — something of a sensation for students of early Danish weaponry. A name that is stamped belongs neither to the rune-master nor to the donor nor to the recipient but to the armourer himself. Like his brother gold-smiths, he was illiterate: the unsuccessful *r* shows his ignorance of writing [8a].

- *98 *Illerup mount for a shield grip 2.* North Jutland. Silver. Runes c. 6 mm. Discovered in March 1983 when cleaning the objects found. The inscription reads from right to left. The word on the right makes a rather less “professional” impression than the one on the left. From the same period as the bronze mount, nr. 1.

- *97 *Illerup lance-heads 1-2,* North Jutland. Full length of the inscriptions 11.5-13.0 mm, the runes 4.5-7.5 mm tall. These lance-heads with their fine zig-zag ornament are among the best of their period. The upper inscription is incised with deep-cut runes, but the lower appears in relief — struck with a die, that is — and the name Ojingar is the craftsman's. Why is only the one blade stamped — did he break his die? Photo: Lennart Larsen.





Illerup mount for a shield-handle 2 (silver). This handsome piece, 18.8 cm long, is made of silver. Note the difference in the way the two words *ta(w)ide* and *ni(p)ijo* are incised and their peculiar position in relation to each other, though the two words certainly belong together. This positioning is due to the plate, but two misunderstood rune-forms underline the fact that the craftsman, who must have been following a sketch, was both illiterate and a poor copyist. The verb *taujan*, to execute, make, is also used in the inscriptions on the gold horn form Gallehus and the Stenmagle box, in the latter with the same *e*-form as here.

ni(p)ijo ta(w)ide, Ny made (it – the shield or the mount)

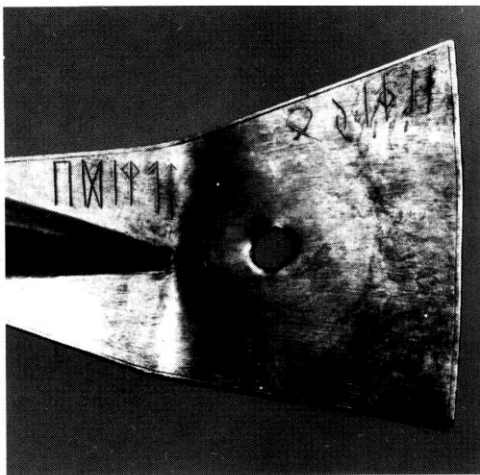
The craftsman's illiteracy is not revealed in the odd positioning of the words in relation to each other (they do of course belong together), but in the *w*-rune in *tawide*, which has the form Φ instead of \wp , and in the third rune from the right in the first word. This last has the square placed in the middle of the stave and can be read as any one of three letters: as *ng* (i.e. \diamond on a stave), as *w* (cf. the form in *tawide*), or as *p*. The first reading, *ng* with a stave, is hardly to be expected as early as c. AD 200. Most probably the rune represents *p*.

The Torsbjerg and Nydam bogs in South Jutland brought a number of inscribed weapons and other equipment to light.
 *100 The following was inscribed on a *shield-boss* from *Torsbjerg* – inscribed moreover on the inside, that is on the part that would be invisible when the boss was in place:

aisg(r)h

which as it stands makes no sense at all. The readiest explana-

Illerup mount for a shield handle 2 (silver). Detail with the inscription. There is a remarkable difference between the clumsy and unstable j-rune and o-rune and the other letters which look as if the smith has used his rule. Photo: Lennart Larsen.



tion is that the runes had a magical purpose, doubtless intended to make the shield an even better guard for the wielder of it. But why don't we find *alu* or *laukar*, the favourite protective words of the Roman Iron Age and the Migration Age? Once more one has the lurking suspicion that this inscription is to be seen in the same light as the many meaningless bracteate runes – and they were frankly a pure swindle, aimed at hoodwinking credulous customers (“you’ll get the strongest spell going!”). The rune read as Υ contributes to this view of the situation.

The *sword-chape* found in the *Torsbjerg bog* excavations of 1858–61 is inscribed on both sides: 7

owlpubewar || niwajemarir

The first line contains a man's name, *Wulpubewar* (*o* stands for *w* – compare perhaps *gaois* on the *lance-head* from *Mos*, Gotland? – and *w* stands for *u*), which has a meaning of its own, namely “servant of (the god called) Ull”. The sense of the second line is disputed: either “the not ill-famed” (*marir* = famed), an adjective qualifying *Wulpubewar*, or “do not spare (*waje*), Marir” (the last word then being the sword's name).



Torsbjerg shield-boss, South Jutland. 16.5 cm. Detail from a photograph of the original in Gottorp Museum. Retouched photograph. The runes were invisible, on the inside of the boss. They are always read: aisgrh; but rune 5 is a highly suspicious Υ and looks more like a “bracteate” Υ . A botch like the inscription on the Vimose buckle?

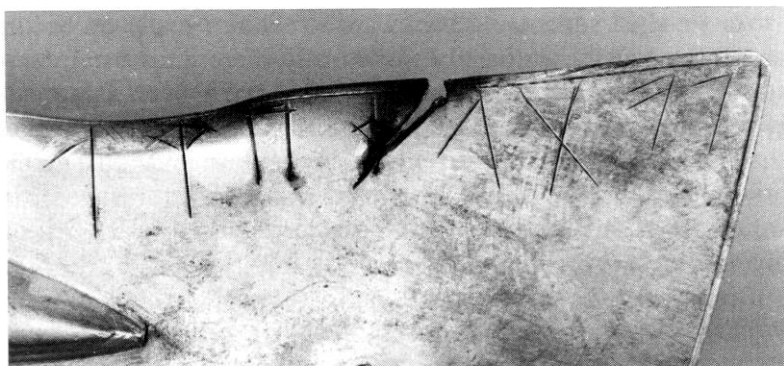


Vimose sword-chape, Fyn. 3.2×2.7 cm. The side with the inscription, *maki-ja* = sword.

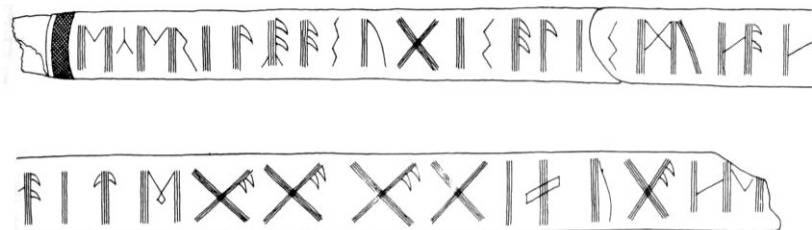
The *Vimose bog* on Fyn produced another *chape* which archaeologists date to c. AD 250–300. It too is inscribed on two sides:

mariha iala || makija

The word *makija* is easily made out as the accusative singular of an *ia*-stem meaning “sword” (ON *mækir*). The letters *ala* may stand for the personal name *Alla* (nominative or accusative); *mari* (= famous) can also be accusative and agree with *makija*; *hai* has been taken to be a dative ending of *mari* or as a “backward” spelling for *aih* = owns! In short, all that is certain is that the inscription says something with words for “sword” and “famous” in it [9].



Illerup mount for a shield-handle 3 (silver). While this book was at the printers, the conservationists in Århus discovered runes on a third mount for a shield-handle from the excavations in Illerup bog. They read from right to left: lagupewa — with the same curious forms of þ and w as on Illerup mount 2 and so probably the work of the same craftsman. Here the writer has forgotten the final r in þewar (servant, follower). The first element lagu means “sea, water”, and the whole compound probably represents a personal name. Cf. the Torsbjerg chape: Wulþupewar. This latest find from Illerup confirms that among the foreigners (from Sweden or Norway) whose weapons were laid to rest in the lake there was a man who not only knew runes as marks but could spell words with them as well. Was he perhaps the owner of Illerup mount 1? Whether he was or not, the models he followed seem to have been written with some carelessness. Photo: Moesgård.



Kragehul spear-shaft, Fyn. The runes sketched out here possibly contain the carver's name and title, a “sesame” word *gagaga*, and a formula of consecration designed to make the spear find its mark. The diameter of the shaft is now c. 2 cm but the wood may have shrunk.

As we shall soon see, “backward” spellings really do occur, and intentionally at that: but obviously there must be circumstances present to indicate that runes have been swapped.

100 If we arbitrarily assume — as has been done with *hai* above — that such a switch has occurred — where do we end? Just think how many unintelligible inscriptions could be rescued! It

98 would be child’s play to read Torsbjerg’s *aisgrh* as *hagsir* or *higsar*!

But when the inscription on a medieval *gold ring* from

102 *486 *Lundsgård* manor near Kerteminde (Fyn), called the *Revnin-*
ge finger-ring, says:

ârota aglagala laga

then anyone who is aware that *agla* was the most potent magic or apotropaic utterance known in the middle ages will be in no doubt that *gala laga* are intentional rearrangements of it. *Agla* is believed to represent the initial letters of the Hebrew *attah gibbor leolam adonai* (“thou art strong to all eternity, Lord”). The first word on the ring, *arota*, is perhaps a form of another of the Almighty’s names, *arrheton*, or has something to do with Greek *areté*, strength, virtue, or even with Latin *rota*, wheel?

We must leave this short excursus into the medieval world. Back in the Roman Iron Age we may note that on an *arrow* dug up in the *Nydam bog* (chiefly famous of course for the handsome *Nydam ship*) there is an inscription which reads:

lua

(with runes written from right to left), while other shafts have marks that may be owners’ marks or possibly ligatured runes. There is reason to believe that this *lua* represents a shuffling of the letters in the most popular and powerful of spell-words found in the earliest rune period: *alu*, whose meaning is unfortunately not certainly established. If the word still existed in Danish and had developed normally it would appear as *øl* (which is in fact a well-known first element in Scandinavian personal names).

The magic word *alu* occurs on rune stones (*Elgesem*, Norway, Krause nr. 57) and amulets (six bracteates) and on a fingerring too (*Körlin*, Pommerania, Krause nr 46). We may take it that it was a word which perhaps gave the object on which it was inscribed a potency suitable to its purpose – protective on amulets and gravestones, death-dealing on weapons.

Scholars have often fallen back on “rearrangement” of runes with very small justification, and the same arbitrary treatment has been extended to ideograph runes. These were mentioned above (p. 34) and we also decided that the last rune on the Slemminge hide-scraper has to be read as ing(w)ar if any sense is to be made of the inscription at all. The *Stentoften stone* in Blekinge, from the end of Period 1, provides the classic example of a rune used as an ideograph. It includes the following statement: 93 133

hāpuwolafr gaf j – Hādulv gave J

Here the only thing to do is to give the j-rune its name, *jara* (English year, Danish år), i.e. a good, fruitful year. – Similar ideographic uses are found on the †*Gummarp stone*, also from Blekinge, whose well-established reading is as follows [10]: 78

hāpuwolafr[R] || sate || stAbApria || fff
Hādulv placed three staves fff

The three “staves” placed by Hādulv are the three f-runes. They must represent the name of the rune, *fehu*, ON *fé* (cognate with Latin *pecus*, *pecunia*), which means wealth. Threefold wealth is what this leader wanted to give his people. One might perhaps compare this “fertility stone” with the *Flemløse stone 2* (Fyn), with an inscription consisting only of the name Rolf followed by three runes, sis:

ruulfrsis

At any rate, it is doubtful whether this stone marked a grave.

By far the most interesting of weapon-inscriptions is the one on a *spear-shaft* lifted in five pieces from *Kragehul* 1877: 101

ekērilārasugisalasμuhāhāitegagāgaginugahe . . . lija . . .
hagalawijubi? . . .

A hard nut to crack. There is no doubt that it makes sense from start to finish and if we cannot interpret all of it, it will not do to label the carver an illiterate. He seems to have known what he was up to. But the fact is that, although we have comparatively many inscriptions from the Roman Iron Age and Migration Age, our knowledge of the language in that early period is meagre and fragmentary. This is evident as soon as an inscription differs from simple types on a par with “This book is mine, it is not thine” or “Fred made this comb” and so on. This lack of contact with our ancestors’ speech and the language that lay behind the runes they set down is something we
 369 suffer from right down to the Viking Age: look at the Hedeby
 347 sticks, look at the Ribe cranium!

The spear-shaft text has no punctuation and scholars have divided it up in various ways. The following seems to me most probable (other proposals are in parenthesis, comment in square brackets): I Asgisl’s eril am called muha (I the eril am called Asgisl’s muha) ga ga ga [see below] – *ginu* [an intensive word or prefix, cf. ON *ginnheilagr*, very holy] – *hagala* [acc. sg. neut.] = hail, hailstone – *wiju* [first person present] = I consecrate.

If we had the whole inscription, we could doubtless make more sense of it – but we must admit that the meanings of *erilar*, *muha* and *gagaga* escape us, though a “hail(-storm)” of spears or something of that kind would strike a right note.

My belief is that the inscription enshrined the wizard’s dedication of the spear (as an instrument of death) and, as in many other inscriptions (see below), he introduced it by announcing his power and skill. Then he shouts out the formula (*gagaga*) which will unlock the potency of what follows, make the spell work – just like aallatti in the spell on the
 358 Lund weaving tablet [11].

A remarkable close parallel is found on a newly discovered English A-bracteate (cf. Morten Axboe, *The Scandinavian Gold Bracteates*, *Acta Archaeologica* 52, 1981, (1982), p. 75,

fig. 307d: Undley, Lakenheath, Suffolk). Dr R. I. Page who has studied the bracteate under a microscope kindly informs me (January 1983) that the inscription (read from right to left) reads

ᚱ ᚷ ᚱ ᚷ · ʀ ᚷ ʀ x · x x x i.e. *gægogæ·mægæ·medu*

Various interpretations of *eril* have been proposed: it means jarl (earl), or Herulian (the name of a tribe living in Scandinavia in the first century or so of our era), or rune-magician, or it is an individual proper name. To take them in reverse order: a proper name will not suit in all the inscriptions where the word appears; “rune-magician” may appeal to the imagination but is an assumption which depends merely on the fact that we do not know the word *eril* except in runic inscriptions; the tribal name of the Herulians seems rather unlikely when we appreciate the fact that the eight instances of the word are spread through several centuries and scattered all over Scandinavia. We are left with it as a title whose significance is unknown (to us) or as the title of an office-bearer of some kind: an eril was the eril of somebody, and in this sense it corresponds remarkably well with earl.

The inscription carved from right to left on the *Rosseland stone*, found in Norway in 1947, seems to me to be closest in syntactic arrangement to the Kragehul inscription:

ek wagigar irilar agilamudon
I Wagigar eril of Agilamundo

Agilamundo (n is often omitted before d) is a woman's name. Women could have a respected place in the society of that time, so it need occasion no surprise to find a lady had an eril [12]. Other interpretations can be proposed however: I the eril Wagigar, son af Agilamundo, or I the eril Wagigar cut for Agilamundo. — But if we accept our first translation, we have a Norwegian parallel in †*Veblungsnes*:

ek irilar wiwilan [13] — I eril of Wiwila

and another in part in the inscription of the *Valsfjord rock*, also in Norway:

ek hagustaldar þewar godagas

I Hågstald þewar (= servant, retainer or something of the kind) of Godag

- 224 And the Danish *Glavendrup stone* from the pre-Christian Viking Age comes to mind in this context:

in suti raist runar þasi aft trutin sin

And Sote cut these runes in memory of his lord

- In what was ancient Danish territory the word *erilar* occurs
118 again on the Väsby bracteate and in another Period 1 inscription, that on the bone amulet (or whatever it was) from *Lind-*
131 *holmen*, like Väsby also in Skåne. Here the wizard begins his
103 rune-master's formula in the same way as on the Kragehul spear-shaft (the two are probably nearly contemporary) – that is, he introduces himself, though admittedly with a name or nickname that we do not understand, *Sawilagar*:

ek erilar sawilagar hateka

I the eril am called Sawilagar

The name was earlier read as *sa wilagar*, “the wily one”, and other equally fatuous interpretations have taken *sa* to mean “here” or “he who”. *Sawilagar* could conceivably be taken to mean “one lying on the sea”, but since that does not make much sense, it has been proposed that we should read *saiwilaugar* (“sea-bath”!) – but even if the rune-writer left out an *i* in *hateka* (people would like it to be *haiteka* – but should they?), we can certainly say that it is going rather too far to chalk up not one but two mistakes against him in another word.

The *Järsberg stone* (Värmland, Sweden) may be brought into the discussion. Properly read it is as follows:

ek erilar ubar h[a]ite harabanar hait[e] runor waritu

I the eril am called the pugnacious (literally, one who rises up in the face of aggression). I am called Ravn. I write runes (cf. Fornv. 76, 1981, p. 81 ff.).

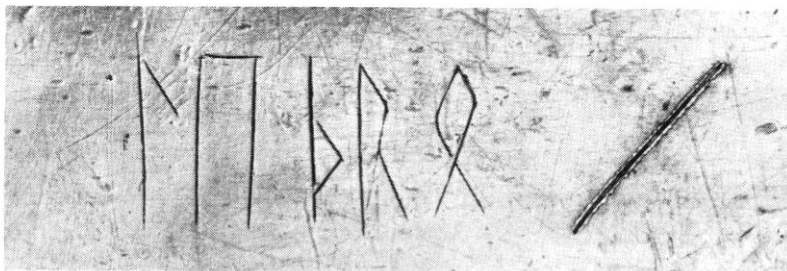
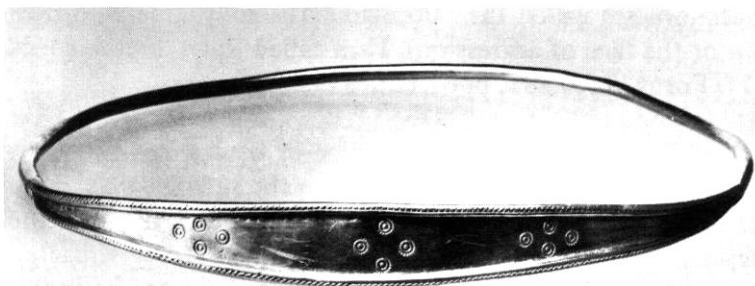
The Lindholmen formula is peculiar in having not one, but two first person pronouns, *ek* and then the suffixed *eka*. — We have no independent means of dating the amulet but since the runes correspond rather neatly with those on the Kragehul spear-shaft, these two handsome inscriptions are probably more or less contemporary.

PERSONAL ADORNMENTS

Such objects come somewhere between tools on the one side and weapons on the other. They could be used for keeping clothes on or fastened, or as weapons in the battle between the sexes. But first and foremost they are objects of beauty.

The *fibulae* (“safety-pins”) are doubtless most important because they are so old, but we only know seven examples, many fewer than the gold bracteates, those shining pieces of amulet jewellery which we have already often had occasion to mention.

The pure *golden diadem from Strårup* in South Jutland is ^{*108} quite unique. It is inscribed ᚠ ᚱ ᚢ ᚱ ᚱ ᚱ ᚱ *lepro*, a proper name (it will be seen that its e-rune with a horizontal top stroke is not a genuine wood-rune). *Lepro* was probably the name of the lady who owned it, though it might be the name of the donor. It has been assumed that the word has something to do with leather and then queried whether a lady of rank who possessed such an ornament could have such a name — oblivious to the fact that the “lady of rank” got her name as a puling infant and that there might be a hundred reasons why she got so tough a title. One could make a long story of this, but it was probably a consideration of this sort which prompted the suggestion that, although *Lepro* is grammatically feminine, it is a masculine name. The circumstances of the find throw no light on the problem, and the most recent personal



- 107 Strårup diadem, South Jutland. Diameter 19.9-21.3 cm. The runes contain a woman's name, *Lepro*, evidently the owner.

name research fights shy of connecting the word with leather and prefers to consider it a woman's name of uncertain etymology.

Bracteates

- Although the fibulae are the older group, it seems best to take the bracteates first because they bring us close to the goldsmiths and teach us something about their knowledge or lack of knowledge of runes. And what we learn from them will provide us with a realistic basis for assessing inscriptions on other metal objects — fibulae, for example, and not forgetting the golden horn of Gallehus. We can then give a simple quietus to a number of speculations drifting from the brains of desk-bound dons.



ᚢᚢᚱᚦᚢ ᚦᚢᚢᚢᚱᚦᚢᚱᚢᚱᚢᚱᚢᚱ ᚦᚢᚦ

Fyn bracteate 1. 3.8 cm. This makes a good picture to introduce the section on bracteates, not so much because of its inscription but because of its superb composition, truly a “Germanic” puzzle of linear convolution. Amazing how much the goldsmith has made of the erect, self-centred equestrian statue of His Imperial Majesty! An elegant, expressionist picture — of a Germanic divinity? A distinguished — a noble — face dominating the space, surmounted by an immense head- (or hair-) adornment ending in a massive plait. The body itself clearly had no interest for the Germanic artist — what little of the human trunk he retains is hidden behind a horse — not a realistic horse but a “Germanic” horse, moving at a gallop (it was another thousand years and more before European artists succeeded in portraying swift movement). A bird of prey with a hooked beak flies in front of the god’s (?) face. But dismiss Odin — he comes later and has two birds as his companions. The corrupt inscription reads: houar lapuaaduaaliia a?? Howar is probably the name of the rune-master (not of the goldsmith); otherwise we can make out the “protecting” word lapu; the last garbled word may have been alu.





3-4



5-6



7-8

- 114 1. Åsum bracteate, Skåne. The biggest of all rune bracteates, a good 12 cm in diameter. The inscription, which can be corrected from the Femø bracteate, says: I Fak painted the runes. Since runes were not “painted” on gold, the wording shows that the goldsmith made (and muddled) his runes following a “painted” model.
- 119 2. Tjurkö bracteate 1, Blekinge. 2.6 cm. A beautiful protective formula in verse written by *Hjald* for *Kunmund*.
- 114 3. Femø bracteate (near Lolland). 2.9 cm. The runes give *ekfakarƿ* but, following the Åsum bracteate, we can supplement the last *f* to read *fahido*, so that the whole means I Fak painted. On the verb see under Åsum above. The jeweller stopped short in the middle of a word – because there was no more room and he did not know what he was writing in any case.
- 117 4. Skåne bracteate 1. 3.4 cm. Four words giving magic protection, though we do not know their precise meaning: *laðu*, *laukar*, *gakar*, *alu* – or is *gakar* perhaps a personal name?
- 117 5. Sjælland bracteate 2. 3 cm. Contains what we may call the standard protective charm of the Primitive Norse period. The rune-master first announces his own proper name: *Hariuha* I am called; then his cognomen *farauisa*, one who is wise about dangers; and last the core of the charm: I give *auja* (which must certainly be understood as safety).
- 118 6. Skodborg bracteate. South Jutland. 3 cm. This and the Tjurkö bracteate have the longest inscriptions among the bracteates, 37 runes altogether (25 on Väsby-Eskatorp, 30 on Sjælland 2). The interpretation of the inscription is not certain, but the word *auja* known from Sjælland 2 occurs no fewer than three times.
- 111 7. Lellinge bracteate, Sjælland. Just under 3 cm. The runes give *salusalu* which is doubtless to be interpreted as a doubled protective word. On the Vadstena bracteate (Sweden) we find the doubled sequence *tuwatuwa* as well as the runic alphabet.
- 118 8. Eskatorp bracteate, Halland. 2.3 cm. A protective inscription which the ignorant goldsmith has succeeded in making pretty thoroughly confused.

There is ample literature on the bracteates and their inscriptions. Archaeologists have written about them (M.B. Mackeprang's dissertation, 1952, Axboe 1982), classified them (Skalk, 1965, Nr 6), dated them, and so on. Philologists have turned to them with relish – the many mysterious words and word-combinations might quicken the imagination and powers of reconstruction of Dr Dryasdust himself – and there is no end to what has come out of the dustbin – that is the right word for the whole clamjamphrie of bracteate interpretations that philologists have produced from Sophus Bugge onwards: all because they made the mistake of seeing inscriptions on bracteates in the same light as inscriptions on stones.

The bracteate inscriptions are important for runology because as a corpus they mark the end of Period 1, i.e. the end of the 24-letter futhark in classical (written) Primitive Norse. What follows with the Stentoften-Björketorp group may still belong to Period 1 but the futhark and the traditional mode of writing are in a state of dissolution – in short, the group represents the transition to the Viking Age.

It is self-evident therefore that the runologist eagerly seeks to quench his thirst for wisdom in the well the archaeologist digs for him. But what does he find when he seeks? He discovers that there is a Swedish chronology according to which bracteates began to appear towards AD 400 and disappeared about AD 550, whereas Danes have dated them a hundred years later. This difference naturally affects the dating of the runic bracteates, which in both systems are assigned to the later stages of the time-span. Meanwhile, however, it looks as though Danish scholars are tending to move the downward limit back towards the Swedish one, so if we assign the runic bracteates to c. AD 500 \pm 50 years, we are probably not far wrong. The number of such bracteates of Danish origin (including those from Skåne and the other provinces across Øresund of course) is getting on for a hundred: but only a mere five or six of them have intelligible inscriptions. All the rest have more or less corrupt sequences, often mixed with symbols that are not runes at all. Sometimes it is possible to trace their gibberish back to an intelligible exemplar. That is the case with two alphabet-inscriptions and also with the biggest 26

and finest of all the bracteates, the one from *Åsum* in Skåne, whose decoration and inscription show that it shared a common source with the *Femø bracteate*. They read as follows:

*110 *111 Femø: ekfakarf Åsum: (e)eikakarfahi

Their prototype probably looked like this:

ekfakarfahido – I Fak painted (i.e. wrote)

Taking these two along with the many meaningless inscriptions on other bracteates, we can draw some conclusions of vital importance for our understanding of inscriptions on metal objects of antique or even medieval origin (think of the many jumbles on early medieval swords!). With perhaps an odd exception here and there, metal-workers were illiterate. They had to follow a copy provided by someone who knew runes or an exemplar provided by the customer. They did their best but the results show it was seldom good enough: it was not easy to copy those funny signs, especially for anyone resembling the Italian soldier quoted on p. 22. And so it could happen that when the next customer came along and wanted runes on his amulet, the jeweller saved a fee to the rune-master and copied his own bastard transcript of an original (or maybe a transcript of a transcript). We see the outcome in the overwhelming proportion of meaningless bracteate inscriptions. Naturally, this

120 Gudme bracteate 1, Fyn. 5.5 cm. Corresponds to the bracteate-fragment 35 Killerup 1, Fyn, formerly read ...undr; but the Gudme specimens now shows that undr (what does it mean?) represents the whole inscription. Photo: Lennart Larsen 1983.

120 Gudme bracteate 2, Fyn. 2.4 cm. Contains the first five runes of the futhark. The upper by-stave of the f-rune has disappeared behind the man's hair. Photo: Lennart Larsen 1983.



could only happen when the customer was also ignorant of runes. They believed they were buying what the goldsmith told them: the mightiest protection he had in the shop, the work of this or that renowned rune-master – and so forth. The credulous purchaser, awestruck and firm of faith, wore his amulet with confidence – just as his younger brothers and sisters much, much later protected themselves with a Cyprianus-inscription that was often no more than a collection of meaningless signs – runes and Latin and Greek letters all mixed up with home-made symbols and doodles. Such “formulae” are called *ephesia grammata* by the learned. “Ephesian letters” (cf. Acts 19.19); and they refer to such doodles and scrawls as “characters”.

It is the same kind of naive credulity that the many bracteate inscriptions beacon forth. But there is another thing worth noting. Of the verbal form *fahido* the Femø bracteate *111 has only the first rune, the Åsum bracteate only the first four: *110 naturally the word was written in full in the prototype but neither of these spells it out in the same way. Such abrupt stops in the middle of a word are well known in other contexts: the metal-worker writes as much as he has room for and breaks off regardless of a word’s proper end (it was the same to him after all). We find the same labour-saving approach on the fibulae, where “abbreviated” forms have caused a good many headaches and a good many peculiar interpretations. Such “abbreviations” will be greeted with a nod of recognition by numismatists working on Sven Estridsson’s runic coins and other ancient pieces of money and by historians of arms and armour wrestling with inscriptions on sword-blades.

The moral is: be wary of inscriptions, whether antique or medieval, on any kind of metal object. The craftsman who does not know his letters will make mistakes much more readily than someone who does. Or try for yourself: take your pencil to an old churchyard and copy an old gravestone inscribed with nice, clear CAPITAL letters – and when you have counted your mistakes, you will have a better idea of the difficulties facing an antique metal-worker.

Occasionally bracteates have what appear to be intelligible words on them – i.e. correctly copied words. Among them are

the magic or protective word *alu*, mentioned above, *lapu* (of uncertain meaning though often translated “invitation” – to what?), and *laukar* which is regularly glossed “onion” (cf. English leek, Danish *løg*). This vegetable sense can hardly be right, however, and it is better to give the word a sense of “protection” or “defence” in line with its existence on amulets [14]. A *bracteate* from *Skåne* has all three of these words [15]: *111

lapulaukar · gakaralu

Whatever the meaning of the individual words, we may be confident that here we have a particularly effective formula conferring an almost hundred-percent guarantee of safety – comparable to the medieval ring with *agla* on it or the wordy inscription on the Odense lead tablet. To start correcting such an inscription – to take *gakar* as an error for *gaukar* (cuckoo!), for example – is hardly sensible: somebody has even suggested that *gakar* is a mistake for *laukar*!

In reality, only three intelligible inscriptions of any length are known on Danish bracteates – but they compensate by being fine representatives of the language, sorcery and poetry of their period:

The *Sjælland bracteate nr 2*

*111

hariuhahaitika : farauisa : gibuauja

I am called Hariuha, wise about dangers. I give safety.

As in inscriptions discussed above, the magician again starts by introducing himself and emphasizing his abilities. – We do not know what *auja* means exactly; but since the rune-master expressly says that he is wise about *fár* (to use the Old Norse form), which means peril, disaster, injury, *auja* ought to stand for the opposite, i.e. safety or security, and that is a more reasonable gloss than the one usually offered, luck or good fortune. Sophus Bugge, and others after him, translate *farauisa* as meaning wise *at fara* – wise or experienced in travelling, or something like that – but this seems flat and feeble and evidently inspired by mistakenly taking *auja* to mean luck.

- *111 The *Skodborg bracteate*, South Jutland:
 aujaalawinaujaalawinaujaalawinjalawid

“*Safety for Alawin.*” But Alawin has no inflectional ending — must be a vocative then: Safety, Alawin! — thrice over. But what about *Alawid*? Is it also a name? And in the vocative? In formal respects *Alawidar* is as good a Nordic name as *Alawinir*. Can we have two people protected by the same amulet? Rather strange, not to say unlikely, especially when one is “protected” three times as much as the other. If sense is to be made of the whole inscription, we must take one name as that of the rune-master: and judging by what is actually written, we must call him *Jalawid* [16].

- 123 However the names are interpreted, no really acceptable explanation has so far been given of these forms without endings. It is a last resort to assume they are forms of address — something in itself unlikely in amulet language; and we shall see later on that the alleged analogy of *alugod* on the *Værløse* fibula is not worth much. But the sense of the message must be that *Jala-* or *Alawidar* bestows safety on *Alawinir*. There is nothing remarkable in the rune-master’s name coming
 119 last. We find the same thing on the *Tjurkö bracteate* (see
 *111 below) and probably on the much garbled *Väsby-Eskatorp bracteates* (Skåne-Halland), where only the first and last words can be read and understood:

h l h
 f(a)hid(e)i(ui)la(i)di(ui)igareēerilar
 Painted (i.e. wrote) . . . gar the eril — i.e. for N.N. the eril
 . . . gar wrote.

The announcement is in the third person but none the less powerful for that. Earlier scholars, and some later ones, attributed a special, or even a distinct magical, significance and potency to the “I” formula — after all, it was found on the golden horn and consequently had to be quite out of the ordinary. A survey of Period 1 formulas shows however that, although the first person type occurs more frequently than the third person type, the two are used indiscriminately [17].

What is significant in these expressions is the name. The first person usage is merely a figure of style characteristic of the Primitive Norse period: just as in the middle ages (and not before then) we find the conceit which endows the inscribed object with a voice (“Fred made me” and so on). That is why the common interpretation of the Swedish *Etelhem buckle* inscription is wrong. It looks like this:

ᚱ < ᚱ ᚱ ᚱ ᚱ ᚱ ᚱ ᚱ ? – literally, mkmlawrt(a)

It has been customary to complete this as *m(i)k M(e)r(i)la w(o)rta* – Merila made me. But after what we have seen of the “system” in bracteate inscriptions, we know more about metal-workers’ runic knowledge – and when we also bear firmly in mind that objects do not themselves utter in Period 1 inscriptions (nor in Viking Age inscriptions either for that matter), it will be obvious that what the ignoramus of a goldsmith did in this case was to muddle e and m (ᚱ and ᚱ) and so made a thorough mess of a rune-master’s original “I” formula. There is all the more reason to reach this conclusion because, as far as we can judge from complete inscriptions, the verb *wurkian* cannot have the object (the buckle) as its object but only the runes, expressed or unexpressed. That settles that. What the inscription was supposed to say was *ek erla wrt(a)*, where *erla* may be an error for *erilar* and where the verb ought to end in *-o*. But we catch a glimpse of the rune-master behind the goldsmith’s blunders.

We return to the bracteates and come to one of the most attractive inscriptions of the period. The *Tjurkö bracteate*, *110 Blekinge, has this:

wurterunoranwalhakurne · heldarkunimudiu

Wrote runes on foreign grain Hjäld for Kunmund, i.e. Hjäld wrote runes on gold for Kunmund [17a]

Try reading the inscription aloud, aloud and not fast so as to hear the slow, rhythmic progression, the many back vowels and the alliteration. The verse-form is apparent from the start – the verb and not the subject takes precedence (inverse

order) – and the poetry finds emphatic expression in *walha-kurne*, a periphrasis or kenning for the gold the words are inscribed on. Foreign grain (*walha* is cognate with English *Welsh* – the foreign – and ON *Valir*, used of the Franks and Gauls), i.e. Roman or Gallic corn, gold. Kennings are rare in our inscriptions. On the Karlevi stone, Öland, we have a whole scaldic stanza in honour of a dead Danish viking, but it was probably composed by a Norwegian or an Iclander. There the sea, for example, is referred to as the “wondrous-wide ground” of the legendary sea-king called Endill, and the dead man is called the god of the chariot of the sea, i.e. ship’s commander.

Towards the end of 1982 five runic bracteates were found at Gudme, Fyn, along with others with no inscriptions. The first of them were discovered with the aid of a metal detector, the rest in a subsequent excavation which is still in progress. Three of the runic bracteates are of the same type, small C-bracteates, a little over 2 cm in diameter – we call them
 *115 *Gudme* 2, 3 and 4 – from a hitherto unknown die. The inscription may be identified as the first five runes of the futhark:

f u þ a r

– even though the upper side-stroke of the f-rune has disappeared among the ornament. Note that the upright of the r-rune protrudes a little above the start of the top side-stroke.

*115 *Gudme* 1 has a very clear inscription:

u n d r

which corresponds to bracteate 35 Killerup (also on Fyn), though on this the u-rune is so close to the broken edge that one might think it was only the end of a word that was preserved. *Gudme* 5 is a large, coarse piece, 3 cm in diameter (weight 4.49 g.), with a pictorial motif corresponding to that on bracteate 39 Bolbro 2 (again on Fyn); but the two inscriptions – both a jumble of runes and rune-like marks – are different.

The bracteates, ornaments furnished with loops and chains, became amulets by virtue of their protective inscriptions,

whether these were written in a rational language or double-dutch. And their power as amulets was increased by sacred symbols like swastikas and triskeles (a swastika with only three limbs, cf. the Snoldelev stone) and other talismanic signs. It is also highly probable that the germanised mounted figure (originally a Roman emperor on horseback) was taken to be a god, though we do not know which. It is unrealistic to bring in Odin, Tyr and Thor, because we have no definite evidence that these gods existed in Scandinavia in the Migration Age – some centuries before the date of the oldest of the Eddaic poems, that is (cf. however the Nordendorf buckle 1 and the Merseburg formula). It is equally pointless to try to identify any of the gods (?) figured on the golden horns. 158

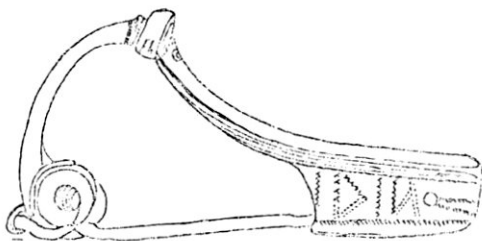
Inscriptions on fibulae

The term fibula is used by archaeologists for the big, ostentatious brooches or safety-pins which the ancients used to fasten their clothes and show off their dress. Four so-called rosette fibulae with runes – nearly barbaric in their amplitude and splendour and according to archaeologists only used as women's adornment – are known from c. AD 200–300, two simpler ones (so-called “bow” fibulae) from c. AD 200–350, while a seventh is the Meldorf fibula which was found in 1979. It is called a “spring-case” fibula (Rollenkappenfibula) and is dated to the first century of our era [18] – which makes it the oldest runic find of all.

The inscriptions consist of a single word, a male or female personal name, or of a rune-master formula. When the solitary name denotes a woman, we can probably assume she was the owner. When it is a man's name, it may refer to the rune-master (equivalent to the formula, N.N. wrote, cut) – or is it perhaps the name of the donor?

The seven fibulae and their inscriptions are:

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Meldorf spring-case fibula, Ditmarschen: . . . ipih | *122 |
| Næsbjerg rosette fibula, southern part of North Jutland: | *123 |
| warafnisa | |



Meldorf fibula, Dithmarschen. Length 8.5 cm. Since the fibula can be dated to AD 50-100, this is the oldest runic inscription so far discovered. There is no reason to doubt the runic character of the letters. Corresponding forms are known elsewhere, and incomplete inscriptions are well known on fibulae, bracteates and other metal objects. Photograph and drawing kindly supplied by Klaus Düwel (cf. *Michigan Germanic Studies*, 1981, pp. 8 ff.).

- 129 *124 Nøvling rosette fibula, North Jutland: bidawarijartalgidai
- *125 Himlingøje bow fibula, Sjælland: hariso
- 128 *126 Himlingøje rosette fibula, Sjælland: . . . widuhudar
- 123 *126 Værløse rosette fibula, Sjælland: alugod
- 128 *127 Gårdlösa bow fibula, Skåne: ekunwod r
- (Hariso on the Himlingøje bow fibula is discussed in the caption on the photograph.)

The Meldorf fibula was found in 1979 in the storeroom of the Schleswig-Holsteinisches Landesmuseum in Schleswig, but the find was probably made in Meldorf, and the bronze fibula without doubt stems from Dithmarschen (cf. Klaus Düwel, *The Meldorf Fibula and the Origin of Runic Writing*. *Michigan Germanic Studies* VII, 1981, pp. 8ff.). The type, a “spring-case” fibula (*Rollenkappenfibula*), belongs to period B 1, which covers the first half of the first century of our era [18], which, as mentioned, makes it the oldest runic find.

There is no reason to question the *runic* character of the



Næsbjerg rosette fibula, North Jutland. The runes (6-8 mm tall) are incised in “tremolo” technique, like the runes and the frame on the Meldorf fibula and the frame and swastika on the Værløse fibula. They give the name *Warafnisa* (reading from right to left) – one wary of tittering, a man of gravity. 126

letters. They are carved in tremolo technique (cf. Næsbjerg), probably contain the name of the rune-master or the owner, and undoubtedly read from left to right. But because some runic inscriptions on metal objects are known to stop in the middle of a name (Værløse), and because we do not know whether some runes may not be missing before the inscription begins, the only quite safe transcription is:

. . . ipih

(and on no account iwih, hiwi or hipi).

The *Værløse fibula* comes from a woman’s grave. As can be seen on the illustration, the part where the pin catches has a broad “tremolo” border, with an additional upright band and a large swastika both done in the same technique. This decorative form of line-engraving is done by pressing or striking a sharp punch into the material and advancing it with a rocking or “trembling” action. The technique was used on the gold horns and is well known from pre-historic silver-work — *126

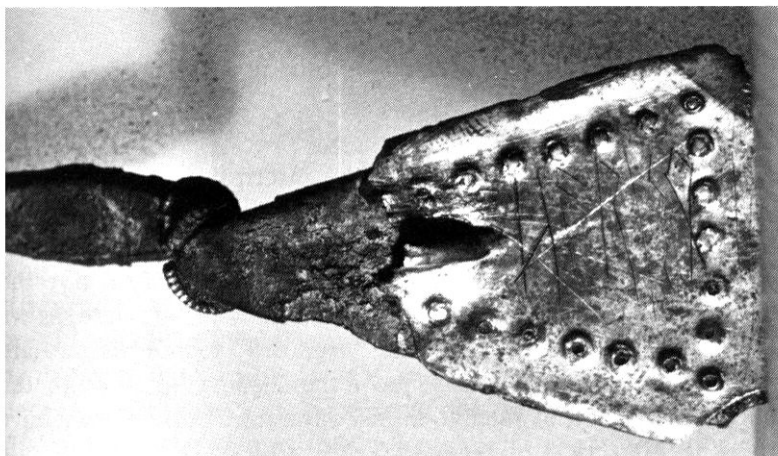


- 129 Nøvling rosette fibula, North Jutland. The catchplate 4 × 2 cm, with the inscription: Bidvar carved. The verb used is *talgian*, which properly refers to woodworking. It suggests that the runes were first cut in a piece of wood by someone familiar with runes and then copied from such a wooden original by the goldsmith. He made mistakes which show that he had no personal mastery of runes and what they stood for.

indeed, the tradition lived on through Romanesque and Gothic times and is not dead even today. On the Meldorf and the Næsbjerg fibulae the runes themselves are engraved by this method.

- It is clear that the “tremolo” ornament and borders on the Værløse fibula were *already* present when the runes were *engraved*. The writer incised them deeply and sharply, giving the first rune, a, plenty of room, but reducing the width more and more as the inscription went on until finally squeezing in a slender d-rune between the swastika and the all too small o-rune before it. That was all the room the jeweller had, unless he was willing to step over the swastika and use that next empty space for whatever else may have been in the text he was copying. But this is not what he chose to do. With the wisdom we have acquired from our study of bracteates we can appreciate that he was in fact not at all moved by any desire to provide a complete message. For him it was merely a matter of covering a given surface with runes, and if it meant stopping in the middle of a word, he was just as happy – like his brother-
- 114 craftsman who was content with fahi for fahido on the Åsum bracteate. So it is not a man’s name in the vocative that we look for on the Værløse brooch, but rather the name of the woman who took it with her into the grave: *Alugod[o]*. (This

Himlingøje bow fibula,
Sjælland. 10.3 cm long.
The woman's name *Hari-*
so is scratched on the
back of the plate. The
forms of the h and s sug-
gest that the writer was
not very familiar with
runes.





- 128 Himlingøje rosette fibula, Sjælland. The inscription on the catchplate ...widuhudar, to be read as *Widuhundar*, literally Forest hound.

123

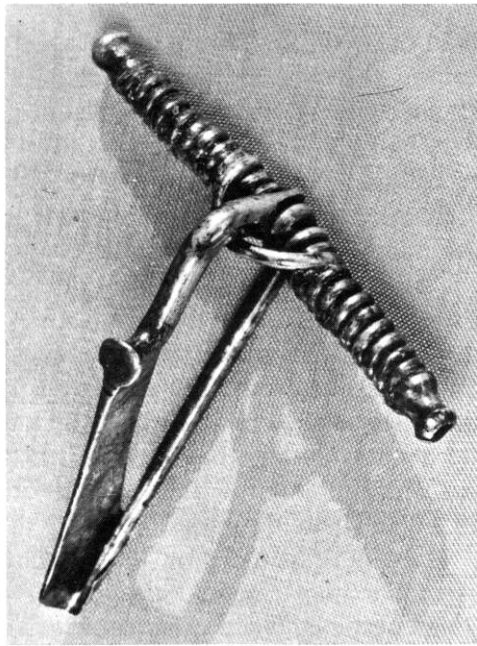


Værløse rosette fibula, Sjælland. The catchplate 4×2 cm. Containing the woman's name *Alugod(o)* engraved between lines done in "tremolo" technique and in front of a swastika similarly executed. Because of the swastika the engraver did not have room to complete the name. Like the bracteate-makers the goldsmith comes to a halt when space runs out — even if it is in the middle of a word.

- is what the first man to discuss the inscription, Anders Bæksted, proposed — though I thought he was wrong then, Kuml 1963, p. 40). A woman's name is the most natural conclusion, but the *Næsbjerg fibula* shows that we cannot rule out the possibility of a man's name in such an inscription. Here, as we saw, the runes are done in the "tremolo" technique and are divided by incised strokes, one of them going up through the third rune, r. I first read them as *warafausa* but what we have are runes that must be read *from right to left*:



Gårdlösa stirrup fibula, Skåne. The bow part 4.7 cm. In slovenly and partly mangled runes: ek unwod, followed by a sign misunderstood by the jeweller; he was ignorant of the art of runic writing and bungled his copy, stopping in the middle of the name (like the Værløse goldsmith): it ought to be *Unwodir*, the un-furious, the calm
Photo: Hist. Mus. Lund.



128

(a)sinfaraw – suitably reversed = *Warafnisa*

This must have been a nickname to begin with: one wary of tittering – a serious man. It is a litotes formation, i.e. a compound which both makes and negates a description (approving or disapproving – unbeautiful, unafraid). More of this in connection with the next inscription. *Warafnisa* must have been the rune-master or possibly the man who gave the brooch to

the woman — he was certainly not the jeweller who made it. This same irritating uncertainty plagues us whenever we meet an isolated name in the nominative on Primitive Norse or Viking Age rune stones.

- *127 The inscription on the *Gårdlösa fibula* from Skåne [19], found in 1949, is:

Π < N † P X M Y ekunwod? — I Unwod . . .

and there is no room for more. This inscriber is even more careless than the man who wrote the *Værløse* inscription: he is so lavish with space at the start that his final d is even slimmer than the *Værløse* example. The last symbol in his row does not belong in the 24-letter futhark but it does belong with the many botched or homemade signs we find on bracteates and, like them, is to be explained as the craftman's blundering failure to follow a sensible original. Otherwise it is clear that we have a rune-master's formula where the goldsmith stopped short in the middle of the proper name, *Unwodir* — the un-furious, i.e. the calm. Norsemen were fond of these negative names and expressions — an attitude and manner of speaking by no means dead today (English understatement tends that way — Winston Churchill called Roosevelt's famous Lend-lease Bill "the most unsordid act in the history of any nation", for example — and we may compare the Copenhageners' "Fantastic!" with the Jutlander's "Not so bad"). — The original text probably read: I Unwod wrote the runes.

- *126 Only the last word on the *Himlingøje rosette fibula* is preserved, a man's name, presumably that of the rune-writer. Some seven or eight runes are lost before the name and we may conjecture that the inscription was originally:

[fahide] widuhudar — Widuhundar painted (i.e. wrote)

Widuhundar is also an intelligible name (as we have noted, d is a common spelling for *nd*) inasmuch as the two elements belong together and complement each other: forest-hound. Possibly that means "fox" — a Norwegian dialect uses the same compound for the arctic fox [20].



Bronze man from Køng, Fyn. 9.5 cm. — On the back of this manikin are 130
the remains of a runic inscription struck into the metal. It consisted of
four (or five) letters but only two are now preserved and since we cannot
say whether they were the two first or the two last in the word (probably
a name), the problem must remain unsolved.

The last of the rosette fibulae, and the last of them to come 89 *124
to light, is from *Nøvling*, near Ålborg. Its well-preserved in-
scription reads:

bidawarijartalgidai — Bidvar carved (cut)

The elements of the name are well known though their com-
pounding is doubtless adventitious [21]. The verb is of more
interest: it properly means to cut, shape and smooth timber —
we met the corresponding substantive *tali*jo on the Vimose 89



- 131 Lindholmen bone amulet, Skåne. 16 cm. — The inscription consists of
the rune-master's name and title, an unintelligible formula, and the
protective charm-word *alu*. The similarity of the runes to those on ob-
103 jects from Kragehul suggests they are of the same age.

plane. The inscription itself tells us that it was incised follow-
ing an original cut in wood. In the third person singular the
124 verb ought to end in *-e* — but, as we saw above, the writer
made a mistake.

Inscriptions on tools, weapons and ornaments represent the
sum of our runic survivals from the first part of Period 1 in
Denmark for, unlike Norway and Sweden, we have no rune
stones from this age. The earliest of these on what was once
Danish territory are the Blekinge specimens from the late
Primitive Norse stage. But there is a small group of objects that
come into the category of “possibles”.

First there is a *wooden stick* from *Frøslev*, South Jutland,
with runes so poorly preserved that one cannot tell whether
they are Primitive Norse or medieval in origin.

Then there was a runic inscription of some length on a
“small *horn*, apparently made of deer antler, approximately a
hand in length and an inch in width” [22] — pointed at one
end, rather like a shoe-horn — as it appears from the extant
reports. It came from *Kragehul bog* and is now lost. A piece of
wood from the same bog — also lost — is said to have had
many runes on it.

- *129 A small *bronze figure* from *Køng*, not quite 10 cm tall, does
have genuine Primitive Norse runes on it but there are only
two of them, an *ng*-rune probably with the form ᚢ and an *o*-
rune. It is uncertain whether they represent the end of a word

— a woman’s name — or should be read from right to left and as the beginning of something quite other. We know a small bronze figure from a grave-mound at *Frøyhov* in Norway which has four symbols cast in the metal. They have been hitherto regarded as Primitive Norse runes and look like this:

𐌹 𐌺 𐌹 𐌺

They certainly have little to do with Scandinavian runes — 𐌹 is the only one found in the futhark — but since all four occur in the Etruscan alphabet used by the Veneti (around Venice — cf. p. 56 above), it seems likely that both the figure and the signs on it are of Venetian origin.

The plum from the end of the period is the *Lindholmen* ^{*130} *amulet*, discovered in a peat-bog in Skåne in 1840. It is a hand-somely worked piece of bone, with an animal head at the front and runes on two of the three sides. The runes are each cut with three strokes, not the usual single-stroke incision, and are thus similar to those on the Kragehul spear-shaft and possibly of about the same age, AD 350–550. The only inscriptions that pick out the runes in any special way are, besides these two, the knife-haft from Kragehul with double strokes, the ^{*92} Gallehus horn, mostly with double strokes and sometimes with ⁸¹ hatching, and the Meldorf and Næsbjerg fibulae in the “tremo- ¹²² lo” technique.

The rune-master’s formula on the Lindholmen amulet was discussed earlier. The whole inscription reads:

ekerilarsawilagarhateka || aaaaaaaRRRRnnn?bmuttt : alu :

I the eril am called sawilagar || Cryptic runes that we cannot interpret followed by alu (a potent charm-word)

Sawilagar the expert rune-master is too clever for us. No one has so far cracked his code, his cryptic runes that we conveniently dismiss as “Ephesian letters” — runes, signs and scrawls that make no sense in linguistic terms. One of the chief reasons why the Lindholmen bone has been regarded as an amulet is the existence of a so-called *kvennagaldur* recorded in modern Icelandic, a “women’s spell” which goes like this:

*Risti eg þér ása átta
nauðir níu
þussa þrettán*

I cut for you eight *æsir*, nine *nauðir*, thirteen *þursar* – eight gods, nine hardships, thirteen giants. The words *áss*, *nauð* and *þurs* are the names of the a-, n- and þ-runes. The Lindholmen amulet also has eight a-runes, eight *æsir*, and the following runes – if they mean anything at all – might also stand for their names – R is yew, b is birch, and so on – but there does not seem much sense to be made of that.

SECRET RUNES

Reluctance to believe that the Lindholmen inscription is a meaningless jumble partly results from the fact that secret formulas apparently constructed on what may be similar principles are known from medieval times.

Secret or cryptic runes are often easy to interpret (or “read” – *ráða* – as the inscriptions themselves say), especially where the system depends on transposing: a rune does not have its own value but stands for the one following or preceding it in the futhark.

In *Kareby* in Bohuslän (now Swedish but once Norwegian) there is a *font* with the inscription:

raþe sa er kan namn orklaski – read who can the name
orklaski

The strange-looking name is no problem if we substitute the rune in the futhark that comes before each of the letters carved: þorbiarn, Thorbjørn [23].

456 An *ivory relief* (DaRun 415) has runes from the end of the medieval period:

þpimnhalasnobnh

If we substitute the runes in the futhark that come immediately after those cut we get: boalin systir min, Boalin my sister.

A third system is found on one of the hundreds of rune sticks discovered in the Bryggen excavations in Bergen. Nr B 443 has runes which say this:

f : ff : fffo : oo: oooh : hh : hhha : aa : aaab : bb : bbb
 f u p o r k h n i a s t b l m

The code depends on counting on from the first rune (which is itself included): f is f, ff is the second letter after f, i.e. u, fff the third, i.e. p. So we get

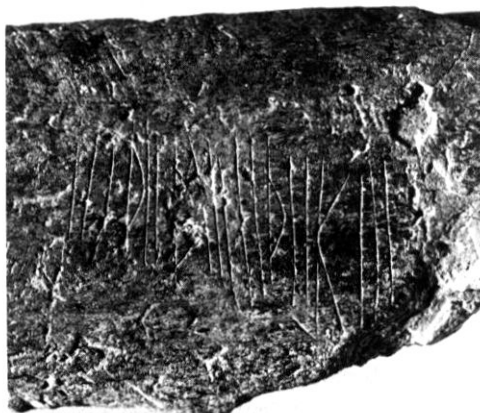
fuporkhniastblm — the runic alphabet with y omitted.

A fourth system is *a numeral one*. The number required may be indicated, for example, by the so-called *branch runes*, where an upright stave is furnished with so many strokes or branches on each side: the branches on one side give the number of the *æt* — the futhark group to which the letter belongs — and the branches on the other side give the number of the letter within the *æt*. To add to the fun the first *æt* (fupark) was often swapped with the third (tbmlr). Thus *ſ* means the second rune in the second *æt*, *ſ* the third rune in the first (or the third if the first and third *æt* are swapped).

Finally one can “hide” one’s message by writing the inscription backwards, as on the *Rimsø stone*.

*187

Søborg bone-piece, Sjøland. 18 cm. Found in 1966 southeast of the castle ruin at Søborg and in spoil that had come from there. This is secret writing (must be medieval) and consists of 3 i-runes + (Roman) D, 2 i-runes + a þ-rune, 5 i-runes + another þ-rune, 2 i-runes + (Roman) K, finally another 3 i-runes. Was somebody perhaps casting up an account?



All this is really very simple. But what are we to do with these runes in *Borgund church* (Norway):

rap ret þu runar uhblintesloa? – read right the runes – and then what? [24]

Nobody has found the answer yet – nor to another Norwegian inscription, in the *stave-church at Nore*:

Itlssiiikutramsstltttll [25]

This is not a mere scribble but secret runes. All periods have had them (the Swedish Rök stone inscription is doubtless the most famous example from Period 2, the Viking Age) [26], and it is the existence of formulas like this from Nore church which cautions against concluding out of hand that the Lindholmen amulet sequence is gibberish. As we recall, the sequence ends with the potent word *alu*, which we should perhaps regard
103 as a parallel to *gagaga* on the *Kragehul* spearshaft or *aallatti*
358 on the *Lund* weaving tablet from Period 2: it is the key that unlocks the spell, releases the magic force of the preceding utterance – black magic to kill or hurt, white magic to drive
493 out demons from mind or body (such as we find on the *Ribe stick*).

THE LANGUAGE IN PERIOD 1

Primitive Norse – up to and including the bracteates

Primitive Norse belongs to the Indo-European family of languages. From a Proto- or Common Germanic group west, east and northern branches developed. The last of these, North Germanic, Proto- or Primitive Norse, underwent a late transition period (the *Blekinge stones* provide evidence) and divided
137 into its own east and west groups. From about the middle of the eighth century we can speak of East Norse and West Norse. Danish and Swedish have developed from the former, Norwe-

gian and the languages of the Atlantic colonies (we know Icelandic best) from the latter.

The vocabulary of the inscriptions represents only the merest fraction of the resources of the spoken language. All the same, it is enough to give an impression of the character of Primitive Norse as a written language, especially when studied in conjunction with other contemporary sources and with Germanic loan-words in other languages (especially Finnish).

This book is principally concerned with the runes of the North Germanic regions. It does not touch upon the inscriptions or dialects of the other Germanic areas, nor attempt to discuss the fascinating problem of the Northwest Germanic branch [26a]. But I should take this opportunity to report that the Danish archaeologists, Jørgen Ilkjær and Jørn Lønstrup, have recently argued (Kuml 1981, ed. 1982, Journal of Danish Archaeology I, 1982, p. 56 ff.), that the weapons found in Torsbjerg bog – and the runes on them – belonged to invaders whose home was in the Elbe region. 98, 99

What is it then that is characteristic of Primitive Norse as opposed to Old Norse?

Comparison of forms appearing in Period 1 and Period 2 inscriptions shows the enormous differences in language that separate them. Like its parent Germanic, Primitive Norse is a long-word language. Only as Period 1 tails off and we come to the Blekinge inscriptions do we begin to notice anything of the phonological developments which so radically changed the character of the language: first and foremost the violent contractions that resulted from loss of vowels (syncope) and associated modifications of pronunciation: *h(a)rabanaR* becomes *hrafnaR* and *ravn*, *horna* becomes *horn*, *eka* ("I") becomes *ek*, *gastir* becomes *gæstr*. We see i-mutation and u-mutation at work in *gæstr* from *gastir* and *mōgr* from *magur* respectively. The change called breaking is visible in a form like *jak* for original *eka* ("I"). 137

The word for stone (Danish *sten*) was *stainaz* in the oldest Primitive Norse; in late Primitive Norse (say from the time of the Gallehus horn) it was *stainaR* (where R, ʁ, denotes a palatal r-sound, distinct from the front r, for which the other r-rune, ʀ, was used). This became *stæin* and later *sten*, as a 81

158 result of the monophthongisation which we first meet in Danish on the ninth-century Gørlev stone 1.

As we have had occasion to note more than once, it is almost common practice to omit *n* before *d*, cf. *widuhudar* = *Widuhundar*, *kunimudiu* = *Kunimundiu*.

Personal names are chiefly compounds and most of them are intelligible. Names like *Widu-hundar*, forest-hound, *Hagi-radar*, skilful counsellor, *Hlewa-gastir*, shelter-guest, are transparent, but a remarkable number of by-names remain incomprehensible. Even if great advances have been made in runic interpretation since Fritz Burg published his little book, *Die ältesten nordischen Runeninschriften*, in 1885, we still understand astonishingly little of the nature and function of the inscriptions and the runes themselves. As soon as an inscription reaches a certain length or departs in the slightest from the usual "A cut in memory of B" formula, we find that every runologist who wrestles with it has his own interpretation to offer — as many readings as there are scholars is the rule in these cases. But even short inscriptions may prove insuperably difficult — we may be able to "read" them, but we do not understand them.

What does "I . . . gæst painted this rune", all by itself on the Norwegian Einang stone, *mean*? Why does the Swedish Tanum stone have the solitary words *prawijan haitinar was* on it? They doubtless say: This was called Thrawija's (scil. stone) — but then it has also been translated: yearning was imposed (on him)!

A specimen comparison (masculine a-stem):

	Primitive	Old
	Norse	Norse
Nom. sg.	<i>hundar</i>	<i>hundr</i>
Gen.	<i>hundas</i>	<i>hunds</i>
Dat.	<i>hunde</i>	<i>hundi</i>
Acc.	<i>hunda</i>	<i>hund</i>
Nom.pl.	<i>hundor</i>	<i>hundar</i>
Gen.	<i>hundo(n)</i>	<i>hunda</i>
Dat.	<i>hundumr</i>	<i>hundum</i>
Acc.	<i>hunda(n)</i>	<i>hunda</i>



Rune stone inscriptions were not cut with a chisel but usually with a pick-hammer, or pick for short. It is certainly this sort of tool that this twelfth-century “romanesque” stonemason is using to work a church ashlar. — Relief on a door lintel in Gøl church, North Jutland, c. 1200. From a drawing by Elna Møller. See the pick-marks on Århus stone 5. 35

Late Primitive Norse

The Blekinge Group

Some generations after the bracteates (c. AD 550) and down to the Viking Age stones — perhaps to c. AD 700/750

The custom of erecting rune stones, known in Norway and Sweden from c. AD 300 onwards, now comes to Denmark. But this late Primitive Norse stage (Period 1.2) is represented on old Danish soil by only four stones, all in Blekinge: Sten-toften, Björketorp, Istaby and the †Gummarp stone.

The language of these inscriptions is no longer pure Primitive Norse but neither is it the Old Norse or Old Danish we meet in Viking Age inscriptions. Younger rune-forms (though not absolutely unknown in older inscriptions) are ʀ ʁ, earlier ʁ, earlier ʁ,



- 139 Stentoften stone, Blekinge. 120 cm. Retouched photograph. — The stone is not a memorial over someone dead but talks of a “fruitful year” and ends with a fiery curse on anyone who breaks IT (the stone circle and
 141 rune stone). For the curse cf. Björketorp.

Υ k, older <, ʁ = j, older ȝ, and two newcomers to the futhark, * and ʁ, which have the value a, in the contrast to the old a-rune ƿ, which now denotes a nasalised a-sound. The new a-runes are usually transliterated A, while the old a-rune is represented by a. * is probably a novel Nordic creation, even though it occurs in the Anglo-Saxon runic alphabet (with the value j). On the Stenfoften stone it stands for (unnasalised) a alongside the j-rune ʁ. Otherwise it is known in inscriptions from all over Scandinavia, including some composed in (almost) pure Primitive Norse. But since it is never found in bracteate inscriptions, it can hardly have come into use before about AD 550. — The Blekinge inscriptions show the 24-letter futhark in a state of dissolution. They also reveal phonological developments: i-mutation in gest(umr) as against older gast(ir) (on the Gallehus horn); syncope in several words, e.g. wolafkr, earlier wulafar, sate, earlier satide; this sate on the †Gummarp stone gives another example of a new inflectional form — cf. further runar for older runor. Old and new may exist side by side: bariutþ and barutr (both third person singular). But even where these and numerous other changes are apparent, the language and the runes are still closer to Primitive Norse than to Old Norse, and the antique runes still dominate the scene. “Late Primitive Norse” is an appropriate term.

Only one of the stones (Istaby) is of the regular “A placed (or cut) after B” type. Stentoften tells in large terms of a Hådulv, presumably a local king, who gave prosperity to his subjects — a fruitful “year” — after which the rune-master pours out a long, and to us mostly incomprehensible, curse on anyone doing violence to the stone. And just the same curse — with a few variations of detail — stands as the sole inscription on the Björketorp stone. In both cases the rune-master says 141 he conceals or buries (using the verb *on fela*) potent runes, whatever that implies. †Gummarp, a remarkable small slender 78 stone, announces that Hådulv placed three staves fff (i.e. *fé*, wealth) — more or less the same as Stentoften, that is, but laudably compressed.

The whole *Stentoften* inscription reads:

*138

niuhaborumR | niuhagestumR | haþuwolafrgafj |
 hariwolafr(m)A(??) usnuh(?)e | hiderrunonofe(la)hekaheð ||
 eraginoronOR || heramaLASAR¹ARageuwe(l)Adudsap̃at ||
 bariutiþ

To the ??? dwellers, to the ??? guests Hådulv gave “year” (a fruitful year, prosperity). Hærulv ??? – I master of the runes (?) bury here potent runes. With no cessation of sorcery, a malevolent guile’s death for the man who breaks it (the memorial)!

It is easy to see and appreciate that we are moving in a world infinitely remote from our own. The sentence referring to “sorcery” and “death by malevolent guile” must mean that whoever damages or destroys the monument will somehow become *argr* – go soft, perverse – and die as a result of witchcraft – which probably meant his next-world prospects were unpromising too. The most loathsome creature the rune-master can imagine is someone who is *argr*. We understand the term better if we see it in conjunction with the Swedish *Saleby stone*. The inscription there utters a curse on anyone who dares to “cross” the stone (mark it with a Christian cross, that is) or molest it, bidding him become a *ræte* [27] and an *arg* woman. In Old Norse the adjective *argr* means many nasty things: unmanly, slothful, having uncontrollable sexual desires, etc. Some scholars have consequently seen a reference to sexual perversion in the curses of these rune-masters, but probably the most straightforward interpretation is given by following a part of Fritzner’s gloss in *Ordbog over Det gamle norske Sprog*. Under *argr* (3) he translates the adjective as “who deals in witchcraft” and refers to a passage in the eddaic poem, *Lokasenna*. He goes on: “That *argr* is used here in this sense can seem all the more indubitable because witchcraft (*seiðr* or *fjölkyngi*) ... is called *inertissimae artis ignominia* ...” This twelfth-century historical work cited by Fritzner, “disgrace of the most artless art”, may give us a lead in deciding that the worst the Saleby rune-master could wish on anybody was to become a witch-woman. Neat confirmation is

found on the Jutland Skern stone: the man who breaks this 236
memorial is a *siþi* – a *seiðmaðr*, a warlock.

The Stentoften stone was doubtless part of a larger set of memorial stones, so the pronoun *þat* in the inscription probably refers to the whole complex. Perhaps the good king's earthly remains were at rest there.

While the purpose of the last part of the inscription is relatively clear, the first part poses more problems. To whom did Hådulv give prosperity? Who are *niuhaborumr* and *niu-hagestumr*? Should we read *niuhaborumr* (there are no dividing marks) or *niuha borumr* (what is that?) or *niu haborumr*? They have all been tried. Dividing it as in the last suggestion, the phrase has been translated: to the nine high dwellers, to the nine high guests. That sounds like the work of another desk-bound scholar. The most logical solution seems however to be that *niuha* in some way or other denotes Hådulv's territory ("Blekinge").

It must at all events be accepted that Hådulv brought prosperity to some settled inhabitants in Blekinge and to some newcomers (*gestumr*). What then is Hærulv (*hariwolafR*) up to? With his alliterating variation-name he ought to be a kinsman of Hådulv – father, son, rune-master? It goes without saying that the four doubtful runes occurring at crucial points in the Hærulv section make the proposed interpretations (once more as many as there are commentators) quite uncertain (however confident the proposers) – and none so far appears even particularly plausible [28].

As mentioned above, the *Björketorp stone* has the same curse as the Stentoften stone but without the introductory part – which makes the whole inscription a riddle. On the back it has a single word that may be taken as the inscription's title or heading: *uþarabasba* – *úþarfaspá* as it would be in Old Norse – a foreboding of bad things. But it is odd to affix such an explanatory word to an inscription with contents that in effect make any such explanation unnecessary. Possibly, therefore, we should rather see this as the conclusion of the message, the sesame word that unlocks the effects of the curse, like *gagaga* and *aallatti* on the Kragehul spear-shaft and the 103
Lund weaving tablet respectively. The *Björketorp* legend reads: 358

haidrrunoronu | fAlAhakhaiderag | inArunARARageu |
 haerAMAlAUSR | utiARweladaude | sARþatBARutr

I master of the rune row (?) buried here potent runes. Un-
 ceasingly (?) encumbered by sorcery, utiar to death through
 malicious guile (is) he who breaks it (the memorial).

Unlike the author of the Stentoften inscription, who “buries”
 his runes in the present, the Björketorp master “buried” his in
 the past (fAlAhak, Old Norse *fal ek*), and instead of the for-
 mer’s *weladaups* Björketorp has an otherwise unknown adjec-
 tive with a following dative – *utiar weladaupe* – which presum-
 ably means doomed to a death caused by black magic. No
 burial was associated with the Björketorp monument. It thus
 106 makes a good parallel to the Järsberg monument (Värmland,
 Sweden), which perhaps also consisted of three stones – dare
 we suppose that?

78 We may omit the †Gummarp stone which was discussed
 above and turn to the fourth and last (but not necessarily
 *145 the latest) of the Blekinge stones, the one at *Istabý*. It is the
 first Danish *memorial stone* we have and its message is grati-
 fyingly clear – even though we do not exactly know where
 our reading should start. But if we start with the word “after”
 – in memory of – then there is an evident difference between
 this and the many Viking Age memorial stones on which the
 inscription, so to say, always begins with the name of the man
 (or woman) who made the memorial – the dead take second
 place.

AfatrRhariwulafa | hAþuwulafRhaeruwulafir ||
 waraitrunARþAiAR (H = A)

In memory of Hærulv. – Hådulv, Hjørulv’s son, wrote
 these runes. Or if we start with Hådulv: Hådulv, Hjørulv’s
 son, wrote these runes in memory of Hærulv.

– and then it becomes just like a Viking Age stone. Hådulv
 means battle-wolf, Hjørulv sword-wolf, the dead man’s name
 warband-wolf or something similar.



Björketorp monument, Blekinge. Monument to what? The rune stone is 147
4 metres high.



The runes (newly painted) on the front face of the Björketorp stone: a long and fiery curse corresponding to the Stentofte malison. The back has a single word meaning “a foreboding of bad things” – which is true enough but seems unnecessary in the circumstances. The runes here are 13-20 cm high.

Many ideas have been floated, many airy hypotheses launched concerning these wolf-men on the Blekinge stones, on their connections with the Herulians or their links with South Norway. And the naked truth is that we do not know for sure how to account for the four inscriptions' mutual relations; we do not know what the connections were between the men named in them; we do not know which stone is the oldest and which the youngest.

Extraordinary opinions have also been expressed on the language and runes of the inscriptions. The peculiar view has even been taken that their radical orthography was old-fashioned, archaising — when the truth is just the opposite, for the writers were clearly feeling their way to newer forms.

139 Why does Stentoften have duds when the carver must have said *daups*? Why does he write LASAR when he means *lausar*? He is experimenting, trying to express a diphthong with just one of its runes. It is a definite orthographic style which found

158 no followers, but it is utterly distinct from the Gørlev stone's *rispi stin* for an earlier *raispi stain*. The Gørlev spelling is a natural orthographic reflection of a regular sound-change.

NOTES

1 A reappraisal of my photographs and casts of this inscription leads me to reject the reading given by Krause 1966 (p. 143); s t and i are (or were?) certain. Supplying gu is of course only one possibility among several that would be pointless to discuss.

2 Cf. Else Ebel, *Die Terminologie der Runentechnik*, 1963.

3 The reading *orte* (and its object) on the Norwegian By stone seems impossible to me (cf. the Swedish *Etelhem* buckle, p. 119 above.)

4 When talking of runes cut on wood, it is customary to cite a pair of ironic lines written by Venantius Fortunatus, bishop of Poitiers, in a verse-letter to a friend in the sixth century:

barbara fraxineis pingatur runa tabellis

quodque papyrus agit, virgula plana valet.

Let the barbaric rune be painted on tablets of ash; what the papyrus performs, the smoothed stick can do. — The quotation is not especially apt when it is a matter of incising or cutting runes because the verb *pingere* means to paint. But it may well be that Venantius uses it in a neutral way, meaning to write; letters were painted on papyrus.



Istaby stone, Blekinge. 180 cm. Retouched photograph of face A. — 142
 The inscription says: In memory of Hærulv. Hādulv, Hjørulv's son, (and on face B) wrote these runes; and this makes the stone the oldest memorial rune stone in Denmark. The regular order of Viking Age memorial inscriptions has not yet been established: A erected this stone in memory of B — there was plenty of time to go yet — but neither does the man who put up the Istaby stone forget to announce his name. The language is late Primitive Norse and the runes are typical of the same period. ^h is a new rune for a.

- 4a Nevertheless, the National Museum in Copenhagen exhibits two "copies" of the gold horns (made of pure gold) – spiral-shaped!. They were commissioned and their design inspired by the State Antiquary at the time, P.V. Glob, a famous archaeologist but no great specialist in runes or horns.
- 5 E. Moltke, *Guldhornsgåder – de rigtige og de selvskabte*, ÅrbOldk. 1974, pp. 135 ff., with bibliography.
- 6 Anders Bæksted, *Acta Archaeologica* 1947, pp. 202 ff.; *DaStud.* 1947, pp. 49 ff.
- 7 Krause 1966 (p. 73) mistakenly reads a dividing mark as an i-rune. With the aid of a microscope I was able to demonstrate to Frau Krause (who was Krause's eyes as his sight failed – and an admirable reader of runes) that there is a difference between the dividing mark and the runes themselves.
- 8 In the Castle Museum in Norwich there is a roe-deer bone from Caistor-by-Norwich with Primitive Norse runes on it: R F J H F †, *raiha*n. It is archaeologically dated to c. AD 400 and is thus the oldest known runic inscription in England. Ingrid Sanness Johnsen, *Arkiv f. nord. Fil.* 89, 1974, pp. 30 ff., interprets it as an inflected form of *raiha*, roe-deer, probably used as a man's name. She finds the same name-element in another Primitive Norse inscription, R F H F B N †, *rahabul*, on a piece of stone from Sandwich, Kent. Cf. R.I. Page, 1973, pp. 19, 21, 182.
- 9 It is more than doubtful whether the scratches on DaRun 207a, a *sheath-mount* from *Vimose*, can be interpreted as runes.
- 10 For a detailed justification and an excursus on the Gummarp stone see E. Moltke, *Jon Skonvig og de andre runetegnere II*, pp. 94 ff. I there take issue with the views expressed e.g. in DaRun under nr 358.
- 11 In *Arkiv f. nord. Fil.* 1970, pp. 202 ff., Harry Andersen has an excursus on *gagaga* which shows how great men of learning can go astray.
- 12 On the esteem which women could enjoy see Ingrid Sanness Johnsen, *Kan runeinnskrifter bidra til å belyse kvinnens stilling i det førkristne Norden?*, *Arkiv f. nord. Fil.* 1969, pp. 38 ff.; cf. *Om Pietroassaringen*, *Heidersskrift til Olav T. Beito*, 1972, pp. 172 ff. On the status of women in the Viking Age see pp. 308ff. below.
- 13 C.J.S. Marstrander, *ÅrbBergenUniv.* 1951, p. 19. Harry Andersen, *NoTSpr.* 1973, pp. 141 ff.
- 14 Cf. Sv. Aakjær, ed., *Valdemars Jordebog*, notes 20, 62, 73, 80, etc., and Joh. Lange, *Kulturhist. leks. f. nord. middelalder XI*, col. 211: when the word *løg* (*laukr*) is found in place-names compounded with *høj* (*haugr*) – which is the commonest combination – then it probably has a different meaning; mounds are not a habitat the plant prefers.
- 15 DaRun bracteate 67, Skåne 1.

- 16 Christopher Maaløe, *The Runic Bracteate from Skodborg*, APhS. 1957, pp. 13 ff., with bibliography. — In his small, popular book, *Runerne deres historie og brug*, 1943, pp. 21 f., Anders Bæksted suggests that *jalawid* is perhaps the erroneous remnant of an attempt at a fourth *auja alawin*. The suggestion has been adopted by some scholars but seems to me less probable because it would ruin the traditional triad form.
- 17 E. Moltke, *ÅrbOldk.* 1936, pp. 250 f.; 1972, pp. 142 f.
- 17a In *Nordisk numismatisk Unions Medlemsblad* nr 5, Aug. 1980, pp. 94 ff., Georg Galster writes (here translated): “A *crown* (corona, wreath, chaplet) was part of the prize-giving system of the Romans. The most probable interpretation is that, with the word ‘crown’, the rune-master gives us the name which this and the other bracteates had in the ancient Danish language.”
- 18 Cf. Oscar Almgren, *Studien über nordeuropäische Fibelformen der ersten nachchristlichen Jahrhunderte*, 1897: see especially nr 33 under *Fibeln mit zweilappiger Rollenkappe*. — Ebbe Lomborg, *Myrthue-graven. Ældre romertids jordfæstegrave i Sydvestjylland*, Kuml 1964, pp. 31 ff.
- 19 Berta Stjernqvist, *Meddel. från Lunds Hist. Mus.* 1951, pp. 159 ff. (first half of the third century); Ivar Lindquist, *ibid.*, pp. 179 ff.
- 20 Hallfrid Christiansen, *NoTSpr.* 1958, pp. 264 ff.
- 21 Krause 1973, § 87, 2: perhaps one who “das Verlangte schützt”.
- 22 Søren Abildgaards *Dagbøger II*, 1871 (National Museum, Copenhagen).
- 23 A. Bæksted, *Fornv.* 1949, pp. 49 ff.; Sven B.F. Jansson, *Fornv.* 1949, pp. 186 f.; Magnus Olsen, *NoLyR V*, p. 221.
- 24 *NoLyR IV*, p. 150.
- 25 *NoLyR II*, p. 153.
- 26 A. Liestøl, *Kulturhist. leks. f. nord. middelalder XI*, cols. 146–148 (*Lønskrift*).
- 26a Cf. on this subject e.g. Hans Frede Nielsen: *De germanske sprog. Baggrund og gruppering*. Odense Universitetsforlag 1979; and Ottar Grønvik: *Runene på Tunesteinen*. Universitetsforlaget Oslo-Bergen-Tromsø 1981. Cf. now Jørgen Ilkjær og Jørn Lønstrup in *Kuml* 1981, pp. 49 ff., *Journ. of Danish Archaeology I*, 1982, pp. 95 ff.
- 27 On “*ræte*” see Niels Åge Nielsen, *Runestudier*, 1968, pp. 12 ff., with references; he takes the word to mean a (shrivelled-up) witch or warlock. Cf. *Id. Danske Runeindskrifter*, 1983, p. 87.
- 28 Niels Åge Nielsen, *Runestudier*, 1968, pp. 28 ff., gives references to works on Stentoften-Björketorp that have appeared since *DaRun* was published.

Period 2. The Viking Age

Old Danish c. AD 650 - c. 1025 (Knud the Great)

Dividing the past into periods is a hit-and-miss affair because transition from one period to another is often very fluid and because the “period” terminology may often mean something quite different in different parts of Europe and in different branches of scholarship.

It is more than difficult to say precisely when the runes of Period 1 (Primitive Norse) end and those of Period 2 (Old Norse and Old Danish) begin. The attentive reader will have noticed that Period 1 was delimited by the downward date of c. 750, while the title of this chapter gives c. 650 for the start of Period 2, an overlap of a century or so. To add to the confusion, the conventional date used by historians for the start of the Viking Age is c. 800!

Some scholars have postulated a runic vacuum between the Migration Age and the (runological) Viking Age. But there were never any rational grounds for such an assumption and, what is more, recent finds can be dated to just this intervening period.

The runic material from Denmark and elsewhere in Scandinavia shows that there was a long transition period in which both the intelligence and the incomparable laziness of the human race began to manifest themselves in speech (contractions, sound-shedding) and script (simpler symbols). Properly viewed, it is a process of decay but we can use a nicer word and say that language and writing develop.

Before we embark on one of runology's most controversial problems (though from the point of view of alphabet history it is not at all complicated) – the reduction of the Primitive Norse 24-letter futhark to the 16-letter alphabet of the Viking Age – it is fitting to proceed chronologically and glance at the inscriptions of the transition period. They introduce »the Viking Age« and, together with the transitional inscriptions of the late Primitive Norse stage, provide the background for the new alphabet's creation.

Although some rune-writers stayed loyal to the slightly



Øster-Løgum stone (the Hovslund stone), South Jutland. 125 cm. Re-
 touched photograph. — The inscription consists simply of the name Hær- 151
 ulv (in the nominative). Is he the dead man, or the rune-master, or the
 man who set up the stone? Compare the caption to the illustration of
 the Nørre Nærá stone. A transitional period stone with the distinctive 159
 Viking Age runes \mathfrak{h} for a and \mathfrak{a} for h. The location of the inscription
 towards the side is typical of early stones, as is also the use of the little
 vertical stroke as a division marker.

confused alphabet-mix in use before the 16-letter futhark was
 generally accepted, we may be confident that many of the
 transitional inscriptions were made *before* the short futhark
 was established, especially those that have \mathfrak{a} for a. In some of
 the transition texts it appears in company with \mathfrak{h} , i.e. the rune
 that was to win the day and become the a-rune of the new
 alphabet.

By about AD 800 the 16-letter futhark is a reality. We may
 conclude this partly from its occurrence in various continental
 manuscripts of early date and partly from a Hedeby find dated
 to the beginning of the Viking Age. This is a stick with the fully
 developed Swedish-Norwegian futhark cut on it, and since this



Hammel stone 1, North Jutland. 70 cm in length. Retouched photograph. — It has been re-shaped as a church ashlar, but the original inscription was certainly not more than two words: Ulv's stone. Transitional type (name in the genitive + stone, cf. Starup; vertical stroke as a divider).

represents a move towards still greater simplicity, it must presuppose the existence of the Danish 16-letter alphabet. The new Danish futhark is first seen in perfected form (though with an *a*-rune like that of the older futhark) on the Gørlev stone, which is a few generations younger than the Hedeby stick but still belongs to the ninth century — if one can rely on the philologists' conclusion that it was not later than about 900 that *R* after *t* (*nd*) was replaced by *r* in the written language (Gørlev has *armutr*).

TRANSITIONAL INSCRIPTIONS IN DANISH RUNES: VIKING AGE STONES AND OBJECTS

From c. AD 650 to the ninth century

Consideration of three factors — script, language and archaeology — can come into play in deciding whether an inscription belongs to the transition period.

Script. The use of * for *a*; the occurrence of runes from the 24-letter futhark — in our present state of knowledge it is a question of *F* for *a*, *x* for *g*, *H* for *h*, *M* for *m* and *P* for *w*. Some inscriptions assigned to the period on linguistic or archaeological grounds do not have these forms. Another early sign is the use of so-called “contour” runes, i.e. runes made with a double line (cf. e.g. Hemdrup).

Language. Preservation of *ʀ* after dentals (cf. above on the Gørlev stone). Preservation of stem-vowels, e.g. *fatur* on the Nørre Brarup stone.

Archaeology. Objects dated before c. 900 by stratigraphic or other means.

1. Transitional inscriptions identified on runological evidence

SOUTH JUTLAND

Haddeby comb.

*351

Depends on whether * stands for *A*, but the comb is dated on archaeological grounds to the early Viking Age (ninth century)

ausut . . . or *husut* . . .

Haddeby peg. Stut-runes.

*371

Øster-Løgem stone.

*149

Type and disposition of inscription; division marks.

hairulfr — *Hærulv* (the dead man, or the man who set up the stone, or the rune-master).

Starup stone.

*33

ʀ = *ǣ*. Runes written from right to left (possibly the oldest of the transitional stones).

ǣiriks [ʰ] *kubl* — Erik's monument.

NORTH JUTLAND

Ribe cranium.

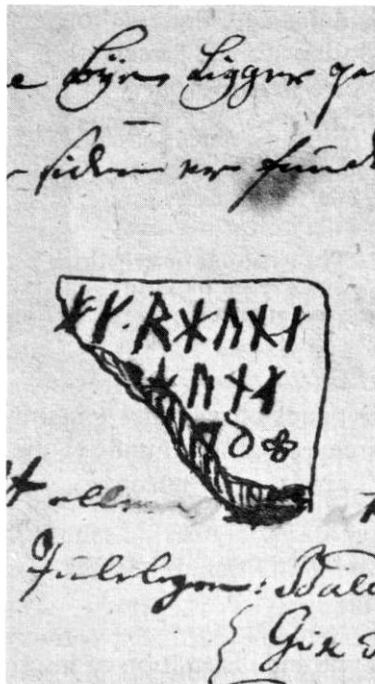
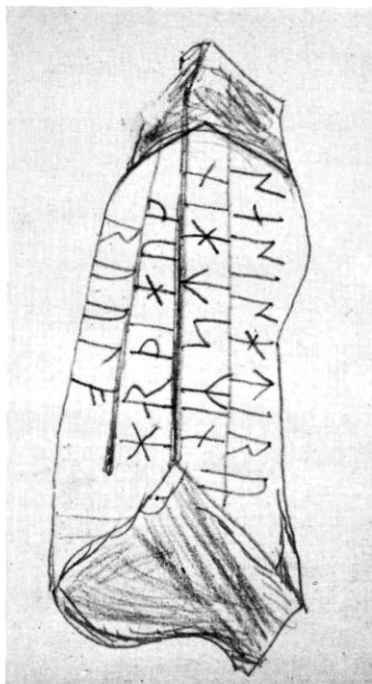
*346

* = *A*, *x* = *G*, *h* = *H*, *ʀ* = *M*

ulfuraukuþinaukhutiur | *hialbburis* | *uiþr* |

þaímauiarkiauktuir | *kunig* [perforation] *buur*

The three names, *Ulfur* and *Odin* and *Hydyr*, are easily distinguished, but they cannot be personal names, as I assumed in the interpretation I first proposed (*Ulfur* and *Odin* and *Hydyr* help *Ris* against *Awærki* and *Tverkun Egbor*) [1], because onomastic



- 156 †Avnslev stone, Fyn. "1 1/2 ells long" according to a drawing made in 1627 by Jon Skonvig, the draughtsman sent out by Ole Worm to record rune stones. The inscription apparently began in the same way as on Flemløse stone 1: (In memory of X) stands this stone. Ro(ulv) placed . . . Y and Roulv made . . . Transitional type (older rune-forms and other features).
- 158 On the right: †Tune stone, Sjælland. From a drawing made by Dean Rachlou c. 1773. Transitional type (* and † = a).

specialists tell us that Odin was strictly reserved to the great god himself [2]. The inscription cannot therefore be "Denmark's first letter" but must be an apotropaic charm in narrative form, like the Hemdrup formula below (and compare the Ribe healing-stick), designed among other things to ward off some "pain" (presumably an arthritic ailment), as the runes uipr þaima uiarki, wipr þæima wærki, "against that pain", convey. The rest of the inscription must be counted unsolved or at best only very doubtfully understood. For if we read hialbbu ris (a man's name), the philologists all shout that this

†Nørre-Brarup stone,
South Jutland. A drawing
made by H.N.A. Jensen
in 1844, who says
that the stone “is not
very big”. *Fatur*, a man’s
name in the nominative,
is the sole inscription.
Transitional stone (stem-
vowel u preserved).



plural form of the verb (it ought to be *hulpu*) is unthinkable at so early a date; and if we read it as “help (imperative) Buris”, the singular form of the verb is incomprehensible, given that it has no fewer than three subjects. To overcome these difficulties it has been proposed that the three names (all of gods, it is thought) should be regarded as a separate section, and that “hialp” is a substantive going with Buris (genitive) – the same name then recurs at the end of the inscription [3]. Even so, *tuirkunig* remains an unsolved enigma. Thus – like the Hemdrup stick and the two Hedeby sticks – and why not include the Greenlandic Narssaq stick too [4]? – the Ribe cranium offers a telling demonstration of how little we understand the early language, of the Viking Age as well as of the Primitive Norse period, as soon as the message deviates from the conventional formulae to do with monument-builders and dead men.

But the inscription has significance for our understanding of the Nordendorf buckle 1 from the sixth century (Krause nr 151) [5]. Here too the inscription begins with three names of gods: *Logapore*, *Wodan* and *Wigi-ponar*, with Odin in second place just as in the Ribe text (cf. also the Merseburg charm: *Phol ende Uuodan*).

Gunderup stone 2. Stut-runes.

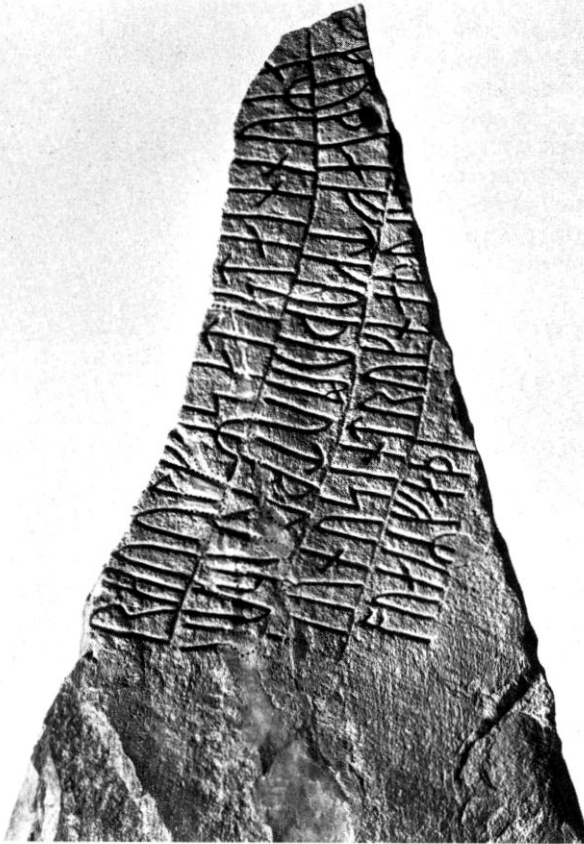
*374

Hammel stone 1.

*150

Type of inscription; division marks.

ulfs † st . . . Ulv’s stone.



- 156 Helnæs stone, Fyn. A good 2 m tall. Retouched photograph. — The runes were partly re-cut in King Frederick VII's time (and perhaps on his initiative?): Roulv placed the stone, *gode* (priest) of the "Nører" — presumably the inhabitants of Helnæs —, in memory of Gudmund, his brother's son, but with the added statement that *they* drowned. The inscription ends with: Åver painted (cf. Flemløse). We do not know whether that means that he painted the runes on a piece of wood to serve as a model, or whether he painted them on the stone for a mason to follow, or whether by his time the verb *fā*, to paint, had come to mean "carve". Helnæs is the first "Viking Age" stone that has the subsequently regular formula: A placed in memory of B.
- 156

*376 *Laurbjerg stone*. Stut-runes.



Flemløse stone 1, Fyn. 125 cm. Retouched photograph. — Set up in memory of the *gode*, Roulv, who commissioned the Helnæs stone. The formula is in old-fashioned style: In memory of Roulv stands this stone; he was *gode* of the Nører. His sons — they are not named — placed it in his memory. And finally: Åver painted. It is a transitional stone, as may be seen both from the occurrence of older rune forms and from the style of the formula. It was photographed lying on its side in Jægerspris Park. 156

Hemdrup stick.

350

“Contour” runes. 𐌺 = ȧ. 𐌿 = a. Division marks.

uanþikiba | fiukati | ȧsa · auaȧubi

The first part can be divided: uan þik iba fiukati ȧsa — and tentatively interpreted as: The storming one never overcame you, Åse. But ȧsa can also be the genitive plural of *æsir*, gods.

The stick also has primitive sketches of human beings and animals on it, along with a triquetra (cf. the Jelling stone 2 and the Tirsted stone) and a sequence of secret runes that remain mysterious [6].

Lindholm knife-haft.

348

“Contour” runes. 𐌿 = a. Dated to c. 800 on archaeological grounds.

sikasuaia | þurufiriþilikapi — Singasven (?) polished for Thorfrid.

152 † *Avnslev stone.*

* = A. a apparently F. R preserved after t.

. . [st](a†)rstain | sasisatiru . . . || . . karþiauk | ruul(fr) . . .

[In memory of NN] (stands) this stone; Ro . . . placed [it as a memorial]; [NNN] made (it) and Roulv . . .

*154 *Helnæs stone.*

F = a. † = a. H = h. M = m. Note also rhu-, kuþu-, sunu with initial hr- and stem-vowels preserved.

rhuulfrsatisfainnura | kupaftkuþumutbrupur |

sunusintruknabu (??) [6 or 7 runes] | auaifapi

Roulv, *gode* (priest) of the Nes-dwellers, placed this stone in memory of Gudmund, his brother's son . . . (they) drowned . . . Åver painted (i.e. carved).

*155 *Flemløse stone 1.*

F = a. * and † = a. Also ruulf and R preserved after t.

Aftruulfsta†r | [st]ainsasiisuasnu | rakupaistusu[niraf†ir]
[auaifapi]

In memory of Roulv, who was *gode* of the Nes-dwellers, stands this stone; sons placed (it) in memory. [Åver painted (i.e. carved).]

Flemløse stone 2.

No transition runes. Also ruulfR.

ruulfRsis — Roulv. sis.

The palindrome *sis* (reading the same forwards and backwards) is probably of magic (safeguarding) significance. The palindrome *sueus* appears on the Swedish Kylver stone.

*159 *Sønderby stone.*

If * = A, this must belong to the transition group, but in that case the writer used both * and † for a (as on Flemløse 1).

þauriaþ or þaurihþ

The problem really seems to hinge on the latter reading: is the inscription young enough to have lost the final r of the

Sölvesborg stone, Blekinge. 140 cm. — Vade wrote in memory of his son, Asmund. The language is Old Norse, not late Primitive Norse, though the old form *sunu* (later *sun*) is retained. Viking Age runes but with some relics of the immediately preceding period: $\mathfrak{P} = w$, $\mathfrak{*} = a$, $\mathfrak{M} = m$; *s* however now has the form \mathfrak{H} as in the standard (Danish) Viking Age alphabet. Estimated date c. 750–800.



nominative but still old enough to have the diphthong *au* for *o*? If, as seems most likely, it represents a personal name (Thored from older *Þorhæiþr*), the stone can hardly belong with the Helnæs–Gørlev group where the nominative ending is always preserved; and if it belongs to the transition period between the Viking Age and the Middle Ages (Period 3), the spelling of the name is as odd as that of *þuriuþ* on the Hällstad stone in Västergötland (Sveriges runinskrifter. Västergötland nr 297).

Nørre-Nærå stone.

$\mathfrak{F} = a$ (as on the Gørlev stone, the upper side-stroke starts a

little below the top of the upright). Ʀ not Ʊ. ʀ preserved after t. Certainly by the same carver as the Gørlev stone.

þurmutr | niqt : kubls

Thormund (the name is in the nominative, so it is most probably the carver's name) [carved]. Make good use of the *kumbl* (monument)!

SJÆLLAND

*174 *Gørlev stone.*

The same points as noted under Nørre-Næra above.

þiaupui : risþi : stinþansi : aftupinkaur : | fuþarkhniastbmlr :
niut ualkums : || þmkiiissstttiilll (:) iaksataru(na)ri(t) |
kuniarmutrkr(b) . . .

Thjodvi raised this stone in memory of Odinkar. The futhark. Make good use of the monument. þmkiiissstttiilll. I placed the runes right. — (*By another carver*): Gunne, Armund . . .

*183 *Snoldelev stone.*

Ʀ = ȧ. * = A. † = a. ʀ = ʁ. ʁ not Ʊ. Division marks. Two sacred symbols: a swastika and a triskele made of three drinking horns.

kun | ualtstain | sunar | ruhalts | þular | ȧsalhauku(m)

Gunvald's stone, son of Roald, *thul* (speaker, reciter?) in Salløv (literally *ȧ salhaugum* "on the Sal-mounds").

*152 †*Tune stone.*

* = A. † = a.

. . . ?k · ȧauna | . . . Auna — not interpreted.

Some consider this inscription, of which we have only an eighteenth-century drawing, to be a late forgery. In that case, one may be permitted some surprise at the alternation of the two a-runes and the n-rune with a stroke through it.

*165 *Høje-Tåstrup stone.*

* = A. ʀ = ʁ.

hurnbura | stain · suiþks — Hornbore's stone, Svide's offspring.



Sønderby stone, Fyn. The inscription consists only of þauri*þ, and it is uncertain whether * stands for h or A. In the latter case the stone must belong to the early Viking Age (the Helnæs-Gørlev group), but then the lack of a nominative ending — assuming it is a proper name — would be more than peculiar. The extraordinary way the stone is set up in the illustration reveals the problems the author had as a beginner in runic photography: to get the right lateral light the stone was taken outside and mounted where the sun could illumine it. It was laborious and expensive and often the sun forgot to shine. The “invention” of flood-lighting and then of the flash speeded things up. 156

On the right: Nørre Næra stone, Fyn. Maximum height 130 cm. The inscription consists of the name Thormund, followed by an injunction to make use of (ON *njóta*), the monument — i.e. the grave-complex prepared for the dead man. This is taken to be a formula designed to bind the dead in his grave. The same expression is found on the Gørlev stone, which appears to have been carved by the same man, but whether it was this man who was called Thormund, or whether that was the dead man's name, is difficult for us to tell. *þormundr* is in the nominative and can hardly be regarded as addressed to the corpse; but whether it is to be expanded to “þ. cut these runes” or to something like “þ. owns this monument” we do not know (cf. Øster Løgum and Nørre Brarup). 157

SKANE

Örja stone.

*165

Ʀ = ǧ. * = A. Note R preserved after t.

stątr : Aftfiri (:) ąsu [:?] ?u? ... | ... ?A ...
 In memory of Fir(e), Åse's (son?), stands [this stone].

BLEKINGE

*157 *Sölvesborg stone.*

Ʀ = ą. * = A. Ʀ = M. Ʀ = W. Stem-vowel preserved in sunu.
 urti ı wab(i)[Af] | (t) ı ąsmut (ı) sunusin ı – Vade wrote in
 memory of Asmund, his son.

2. Transitional inscriptions identified on linguistic evidence

SOUTH JUTLAND

*153 †*Nørre-Brarup stone.*

Stem-vowel u preserved. ı = a.

fatur – a man's name [7].

FYN

†*Ørbæk stone.*

r preserved after Ʀ. Apparently only ı for a.

[k]up(u)friƦ : (raist or rist) (a)ft : Ʀiaubur(k)

Gudfred (?) carved in memory of Thjodborg (?).

3. Transitional inscriptions identified on archaeological evidence

SOUTH JUTLAND

The Haddeby stut-rune inscriptions that have come to light in the excavations at Hedeby are not included here, although several of them are dated on archaeological grounds to before AD 900. They are treated with other stut-rune inscriptions.

370 371

NORTH JUTLAND

347 *348 *Ålborg buckle.*

slightly bungled u-rune, a possibility one must take into account seeing that a 'g' makes no sense. Both writers take the first three names as appellations for Odin. *Kabell: Ulfur auk Óðinn / auk HoddjóR! / Hjalp borr is / viðR þeim á verki; / auk dvergkuning / bý or!* Der Bohrer ist Hilfe gegen den am Werke; schaffe den mächtigsten Erreger von Krankheit aus seinem Sitz hinaus. (The gimlet is aid against the one at work; remove the sovereign stimulator of disease from his place.) *Nielsen: Ulfurr auk Óðinn / auk Hotyr / hjalp Buri is / wiðr þæima wærki auk dwærggunju:* Ulvur og Odin og Højtyr er hjælp for Bur mod disse (ting): smerte og dværgeslag. — Bur (= risteren). (U. and O. and H. are aid for Bur against these (things): pain and dwarfstroke. — Bur (= the inscriber); cf. idem, *Danske runeindskrifter*, 1983, p. 53. Cf. further Nielsen SJYlMånedsskrift, 1980, pp. 276 ff. and Harry Andersen *ibid.* 1981, p. 21 ff.

- 4 E. Moltke, *En grønlandsk runeindskrift fra Erik den Rødes tid*. Narsaqpinden, *TidsskrGrønland* 1961, pp. 401 ff. — Ingrid Sanness Johnsen, *Stuttruner*, 1968, p. 349. Helge Guðmundsson, *Gripla* 1, 1975, pp. 188 ff.
- 5 A recent discussion of this inscription is by Ute Schwab in *Michigan Germanic Studies* VII, 1, 1981, pp. 38 ff. She proposes that Logapore should be read as a dative singular, consequently denoting the recipient of the fibula. Neither this solution nor the suggestion that we should read: Ionari commends itself. Cf. Klaus Düwel, *Runen und interpretatio christiana. Zur religionsgesch. Stellung der Bügelfibel von Nordendorf I*, in *Tradition als historische Kraft*, 1982, pp. 78 ff.
- 6 Peter Skautrup, *Kuml* 1951, pp. 154 ff. [erroneous readings]. — K. M. Nielsen, *Årsb. f. Selsk. f. nord. Fil.* 1956–57, pp. 10 f. — Harald Andersen, *Den brændte stok*, *Skalk* 1971, nr 5, pp. 18 ff. [with excellent illustration of details]. N.Å. Nielsen, *Danske runeindskrifter*, 1983, pp. 58 ff. The last part is translated: Åse has luck in strife.
- 7 Differently A. Bæksted, *Begravede runestene*, *ÅrbOldk.* 1951, p. 89 f.

CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF THE TRANSITIONAL INSCRIPTIONS

What do these transitional inscriptions tell us of the runes and language of their time? What messages do they convey?

First and foremost, they show that a new runic alphabet is on the way, and in the latest of the group this new futhark is an established fact. We need not bother about ʁ, ʀ, þ, R, ʃ, l, ʈ, ʁ, and ʀ, because they are the same in the 24-letter and

the 16-letter futhark – the only difference is that the n-rune now always has the form þ, with the cross-stroke slanting down from left to right. But * = h, † = a, ʏ = s, ʝ and ʞ = m do not belong in the old alphabet, nor entirely does ʟ = r. ʝ (already on the Eggjum stone, Norway, and perhaps on the Ålborg buckle) is a variant of the k-rune which occurred in the Blekinge group and earlier (ʝ). We also find ʏ on the Istaby stone but here it has the value a. The forms ʟ r and þ n appeared sporadically already in Primitive Norse times alongside ʝ and †, but now they are regularised, the former with the side-strokes going downwards (to distinguish it from ʝ m) and the latter, as we just saw, with the shape þ to distinguish it from † a. This a-rune – for unnasalised a, distinct from ʟ a – is the most interesting novelty; the older transitional inscriptions have * for a, some have both * and †; but when the final form of the 16-letter futhark was established, * gets the value h, as we have seen on the Gørlev stone. It seems safe to conclude that (except in the carvings of a few steadfast souls) inscriptions with * as an a-rune are older than the creation of the 16-rune alphabet.

In addition to these new runes, inscriptions of the Helnæs type continue to cherish five old runes: ʟ a (later ʟ), x g, ʞ w, ʏ h, and ʞ m. Only Sölvesborg in Blekinge has an example of a w-rune [1] – the others use the u-rune for w – and the Ribe cranium is the only one with a g-rune.

Inscriptions with * for a must necessarily express h by ʏ. Snoldelev, Gørlev and Nørre Nærå adopt the new m-rune in the variant forms ʝ and ʞ; but no statistics are possible because m does not appear in any of the other inscriptions cited above. Gørlev introduces all the new rune-forms, but the upper side-stroke of its ʟ still begins close to the top of the stave as in the 24-letter futhark.

Linguistically we note that the transition to Old Danish is almost complete, though we still find vestiges of initial h before r (rhuulfr, ruhalts) and a few examples of link-vowels in compounds and stem-vowels (kupumut, sunu, fatur) and of r preserved after t and þ. But do these evidence anything but the conservatism of a *written* language?

Finally we observe the first instances of monophthongised

forms — rispi stin (Gørlev) for older raispi stain (and possibly rist for raist on †Ørbæk); in this particular the Gørlev inscription appears typologically youngest in the group or at least the work of the most radical rune-master among them. But at the same time it is obvious that this monophthong spelling must raise doubts about the evaluation of the traditional diphthong spelling ai on runic monuments from the islands and Jutland, whose age in relation to the Gørlev stone is unknown. In Old Saxon *ai* was simplified to *e* in the ninth century, the century to which some of our transitional inscriptions must belong. But for a long time yet — long after the diphthongs had disappeared throughout Denmark — rune-carvers went on writing raispi stain or reispi stein (just as the English go on writing “write” and “thought” and say “rite” and “thawt”). The change of *au* to *o*, *ø* finds an interesting reflection on the two Jelling stones: the oldest known example of the change (though cf. Haddeby 2) is on Gorm’s stone, þusi, while on the stone of his son, Harald, we find the old-fashioned þausi — so that in orthography the earlier stone is typologically younger than the later one. This kind of observation preaches caution in attempting relative datings. There are still many Danes who write *aa* in spite of the fact that it is now a good many years since *å* was officially adopted as the legitimate son and heir.

As we shall see further below, the Helnæs-Gørlev group also represents a transition in terms of form and content. The only inscriptions with formulas referring to the man who set up or carved the stone are †Ørbæk (Gudfred carved), Helnæs (Rouly placed), Gørlev (Thjodvi raised) and Sölvesborg (Vade wrote). Later in the Viking Age the stock reference is to the man who set up the stone, usually in the form “NN raised this stone in memory of . . .” †Avnslev and Flemløse 1 still have the archaic “In memory of NN stands . . .”

Although some of the inscriptions may post-date Ansgar’s missionary visits to Hedeby and Ribe (c. 935), there is no sign of Christianity in them. †Nørre Brarup, Flemløse 2 and Nørre Næraå confine themselves to a single personal name but we do not know whether this signifies the rune-master (whose mighty name will guarantee peace for the grave and the memorial stone) or the man who put up the stone or the man



Örja stone, Skåne. 90 cm. Retouched photograph. — It stands in memory of Fire, Åse's (son?). A transitional stone (type of formula, older runes, etc.). 159

On the right: Høje Tåstrup stone, Sjælland. 165 cm. Hornbore's stone, 158
and he was a *SwipingR*, a descendant of Svide. A "genetival" type of
inscription, cf. e.g. Starup. A transitional stone (type of formula, older
runes). *33

who is dead. There seems most to be said in favour of the first possibility.

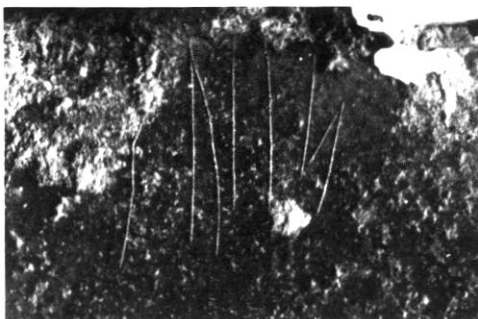
The inscriptions mention a *gode* and a *thul* (*goði* and *pulr* in Old Norse), both of whom must have been pagan "officials". The former (from the root in *god*, god) means one concerned with religion, a man corresponding in some way to a Christian priest. What a *thul* was we don't know — perhaps a sort of district leader or some other kind of public servant? In Old Norse a *pulr* was a speaker or speech-maker, *pularstóll* was the chair from which he delivered his utterances, *pula* was a speech, recital, list, and the verb *pylja* meant to speak, recite, mumble.

On these analogies it has been concluded that a *thul* might have been a kind of lawspeaker – also with religious authority. But why does the Snoldelev stone have not only a swastika but a triskele made of three *drinking horns*? Did the *thul* have something to do with sacrifice, libations? Was it to the accompaniment of such ceremonies that he used to *pylja* – recite, speak or mumble – on the Sal-mounds? Tulshøj, “thul’s mound”, is quite a common place-name. Both terms, *gode* and *thul*, disappeared when Christianity triumphed.

One might believe that *Oðin-ka-ur* (Harry Andersen analyses the components in this way, certainly correctly) was a good pagan name, evidence of veneration for the chief god among the *æsir*. And people have believed it too (cf. e.g. Krause 1966: “den mit den Odin-geweihten Locken”) [2]; but in NamnBygd 1974, John Kousgård Sørensen disposed of the divinity and demonstrated that the first element in the name was not the name of the god himself but an independent derivation from the same root as Odin. This was an adjective meaning “furious”, while the latter element *ka-ur* from Primitive Norse **kawura-* means “associated with, given to” – so it is easy to see that the first Odinkar ever was a cross-grained, hot-tempered fellow.

103 157 Flemløse 2 and Nørre Nærá have a supplement to the personal name. The first is followed by the palindrome *sis* [3], whose meaning is unknown. The second has an injunction: *niȳt kubls*, and Gørlev has the same with an adverb added: *niut ual kums*. This has been translated as “Enjoy your grave well”, which would correspond to R.I.P. on Christian tombs. But the verb *njóta* (the same carver was doubtless responsible for both stones and that must be how he would have pronounced it) had “use” or “employ” as its major sense at that time, and it then becomes difficult to translate *ual* on the Gørlev, stone simply as “well”, as has hitherto been done. It seems to make little sense, for what does enjoining the dead man to use his *kumbl* well signify? We get closer to the intention if we turn to Fritzner’s incomparable Ordbog over det gamle Norske Sprog, where the meaning of *vel*, adverb, is glossed “in such a way as to make others content, or to show oneself content with something”. The injunction thus bids the dead man to

Ålborg buckle, North Jutland. — The inscription on the back. The height of the last rune, s, is 7 mm. It cannot be determined whether the first rune is k (the young form) or f, i.e. whether we should read kutis or futis, doubtless the genitive of the name of the owner of the buckle.



use his *kumbl* in such a way as to content both himself and those who survive him: in other words, you stay in your grave and don't roam about like a zombie. The imperative *njót kumbls* (*wæl*) thus becomes first-hand evidence of the Danes' view of the grave as the dwelling-place of the dead, his sanctuary, his home. We have a tale in the thirteenth-century Icelandic *Eyrbyggja* saga about Helgafell, where the dead members of a local leading family congregated. A man saw the mountain open to welcome a new arrival, glimpsed the scene inside and heard a cheerful din and the clash of drinking horns. Of course we cannot tell whether the Gørlev and Næra people thought of the graves of their dead in just the same way, but it is clear that the *njót*-formula reveals quite a different notion of the grave from that reflected in Viking Age stones from c. AD 1000. And it is equally clear that the *njót*-formula was regarded as a — rather mild — spell to bind the dead man to his burial place.

The word *kumbl* appears as a singular on the Gørlev and Næra stones, but in later inscriptions it is always in the plural. Its precise meaning will be discussed below in connection with the Jelling stones, where archaeological circumstances contribute to its elucidation.

But the Gørlev stone has two more formulae of some length which, all things considered, must also be connected with pagan grave-magic. One consists of the futhark itself. When we reflect that the Primitive Norse futhark from Kylver (Gotland) was on a slab *within* a grave and that the same futhark occurs

on a number of bracteate amulets – and we now discover it on a Viking Age gravestone – it must be reasonable to interpret all these in the same way: the futhark itself must have been among the most powerful of protective charms. This fits like a glove in the case of Gørlev: the inscription first announces who raised the stone and in whose memory, next the stone (and the grave) are safeguarded by the futhark, and then the dead man is told to stay in the grave and be content with his lot there. – What then of the long magical sequence on the other side: þmkiisssttitiilll?

If we take the first three runes and make them the initials of words made up of one rune from each of the following triplets, we end with *pistil* (thistle), *mistil* (mistletoe) and *kistil* (a little kist or box). We are not much the wiser for that. But what is more important is that we know that this same formula was current in Sweden, Norway and Iceland. It is found for example on the Swedish Ledberg stone, from the beginning of the eleventh century, which also has a graphic illustration of Ragnarök scenes – Odin swallowed by the wolf Fenrir (or perhaps it is Vidar, shoving his foot into the wolf's maw to rive his jaws in twain) and possibly the ship, Naglfar, setting sail with its monstrous crew. The Gørlev and Ledberg formula occurs in various other sources, among them the late Icelandic Bósa saga. In this text the formula is a little corrupt, with 3 x 6 runes, the first group of which appears to be the first æt of the futhark in transposed order. The runes are called “bad men”, and the witchwife says to the king:

171 *171

Can you not read them
as I think right,
to death shall you
be gnawed by dogs,
and your soul
will sink to Hell.

A fair enough curse – and in reality that is just what is needed on the Gørlev stone: we have the “setting up” formula, the protective charm, the spell to keep the dead in his grave – and then comes what the Björketorp inscription calls uparabasba –

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uþarfaspá – “a foreboding of bad things” – a hefty curse called down on anyone who disturbs the grave-monument. It answers to the formula on later rune stones: may he become a *ræte* who desecrates this monument (consecrated by Thor). – Here, alive and kicking, is the *märchen* motif, so common in later times, which requires a riddle to be read before an action can be performed.

It was mentioned above that the solitary name, Hærulv, on the Øster Løgum stone might be that of the dead man or of the man who set up the stone or of the rune-master; cf. also Nørre Næra. We are faced with the same uncertainty when we meet single names on Period 1 stones in Sweden and Norway, e.g. Skärkind (Sweden): *skipaleubar* (literally “pelt-dear”); Møgedal (Norway): *laipigar* (literally “loathsome”); Sunde (Norway): *widugastir* (literally “forest-guest”).

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Now the Norwegian *Kjølevik stone* can also be brought into the discussion because its sequence has hitherto been misread. What stands on the stone is:

ek hagustadar | hlaaiwido magu minino | hadulaikar
I Hagusta(1)dar buried my son. Hadulaikar.

hadulaikar stands in the top line and has previously been read as the first word of the inscription and taken to be the name of the dead son. But in fact this name was actually written last by the carver, for he accommodates its runes to those in the line beneath. Coming last in the nominative it cannot refer to the dead son, nor of course can it refer to his father who has already given his name. That only leaves the carver or rune-master who in this case were probably identical.

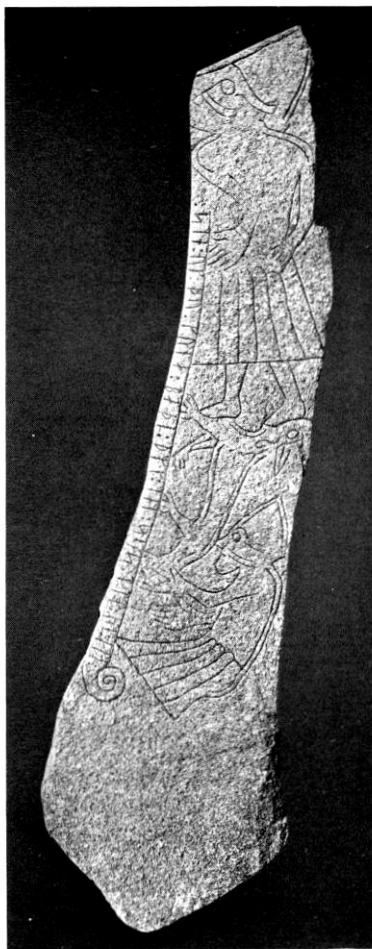
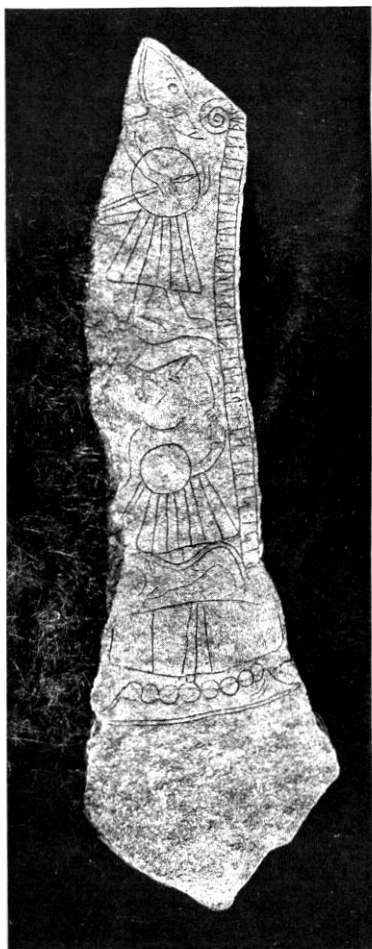
NOTES

- 1 The correct reading of the Swedish Rävsaal stone is: hariþulfs (not hariwulfs) stainar, cf. Harry Andersen in Fornv. 1947, pp. 303 ff.
- 2 Nachr. der Akad. der Wiss. in Göttingen. I. Phil-Hist. Kl. 1966, p. 5.
- 3 As noted earlier, the fifth-century Kylver grave-slab (Gotland) has the palindrome *sueus* on it; it is associated there with the futhark.

The advance of the new alphabet

The Gørlev stone shows that the Viking Age 16-rune futhark had arrived in Denmark, but we do not know at present precisely when it came into being. Before we go on to consider the inscriptions themselves, however, we should pause to consider where, how and when this radical reform took place. Was it the culmination of a long development in language and script, or was it the result of a sudden detonation?

A priori it must seem strange and striking that people willingly gave up an alphabet of 24 letters, a sequence that was just as effective and expressive as our present-day Roman alphabet and actually better equipped than the classical alphabet which lacked U, J and a separate symbol for NG together. And what did they give it up for? Something we can only call a pretty feeble orthographic instrument: a mere 16 letters, whose general usefulness they further reduced — as it may seem to us — by self-indulgently including two a-runes and two r-runes. The result was that individual runes came to have more than one phonetic significance (as did members of the 24-letter futhark on a more limited scale): the u-rune could stand for *u*, *o*, *ø*, *y* and *w*, the i-rune for *i*, *e* and *æ*; k might represent *k*, *g*, *nk*, *ng*; t could stand for *t*, *d*, *nt* and *nd* (as *t* and *d* had also done in the 24-letter series); and so on. A word spelt in runes as *trik* could thus theoretically be equated with *trik*, *trek*, *træk*, *drik*, *dræng*, etc. Two vowels put side by side could indicate that the vowel sound intended was represented by neither of them but signified a third sound made in their vicinity: *ai* could thus signify *æ*, *au* could signify *o* or *å*. But this use of two vowel runes together could set a further trap: were they to be read as a monophthong (*æ*, *o*) or a diphthong (*æi*, *åu*)? The nasal a-rune was given a notable special function. On the big Jelling stone it signifies nasalised *ǣ* but it is also used there for an *æ* sound: *sǣR* = *sæR* (“for himself”). And one may also ask whether there was a special



Ledberg stone, Östergötland. 350 cm. Side B has a picture of a monster with jaws wide open round the foot of a helmeted man. The monster is probably the wolf Fenrir and the man then represents either *Odin*, whom Fenrir swallows at Ragnarök, the final cataclysmic struggle between the gods and giants, or *Odin's* silent son, *Vidar*, who then avenges his father by thrusting his foot into the wolf's maw and splitting his jaws apart. Another helmeted but legless figure below the wolf cannot be identified. Side A shows a Viking ship with shields along the side and indications of a sail. Above it are two helmeted warriors with round shields, each of whom has a slim dog-like animal underneath. The inscription reads: (u)isi (or risi) : sati : stn : þasi : iftir : þurkut : ui.....t : faþur || : sin : uk : þu : kuna : baþi : þmk : iii : sss : ttt : iii : lll : Vise (or Rise) placed this stone in memory of Thorgot (with an illegible nickname), his father, and he and Gunne, the pair of them – concluded by the same formulaic curse as on the Gorlev stone.

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172 194

388 291

orthographic rule that $\text{a} + \text{u}$ could represent the monophthong o , å : on the Nørre Næra stone we saw that $\text{n}i\text{a}u\text{t}$ must be read *njót*; on the big Jelling stone $\text{þ}a\text{u}r\text{u}i$ must be read as *þorwi*; on the Stora Köpinge stone in Skåne and on Haddeby stone 2 $\text{a}u\text{k}$ can no doubt only be read as *ok* (cf. the spelling *aok* on the Tillitse stone); $\text{a}u\text{m}u\text{ta}$ on the Sjørind stone must accordingly indicate a pronunciation *Åmunda*, which makes the name the same as the one on Århus stone 1; cf. $\text{a}u\text{l}a\text{i}b\text{r}$ in the Ballaugh inscription, Man (Ingrid Sanness Johnsen, Stuttruner, p. 226).

Let us take a small orthographic instance. On Gorm's Jelling stone the name of his queen is written $\text{þ}u\text{r}u\text{i}$ – that might represent *Thurwi*, *Thorwi* or *Thyrwi*. We would not know which of these Gorm used when he shouted for his wife if we did not have his son's big Jelling stone on which, as we just saw, Harald had his mother's name spelt $\text{þ}a\text{u}r\text{u}i$ – which can only be read as *Thorwi*. We may be sure that that is what Gorm called her too.

So the new short futhark had many disadvantages and one has every sympathy for the reluctance of early scholars to admit that it was a development from the "gothic" runes. But the many new discoveries made it possible for Wimmer to establish that it was incontrovertibly the successor of the 24-letter futhark.

It is easiest and clearest to visualise the process by taking the Primitive Norse 24-rune futhark and the Gørlev 16-rune futhark as two outer points and interposing between them two reconstructed alphabets, one made up of the runes used in the late Primitive Norse inscriptions and the other of the runes used in the transitional inscriptions of the early Viking Age period.

The Primitive Norse futhark with variants:

$\text{F} \text{N} \text{Þ} \text{F} \text{R} \text{C} \text{A} \text{Y} \text{X} \text{P} : \text{H} \text{N} \text{I} \text{J} \text{P} \text{I} \text{R} \text{S} : \text{T} \text{B} \text{M} \text{P} \text{M} \text{I} \text{O} \text{D} \text{O} \text{X}^*$
 $\text{f} \text{u} \text{þ} \text{a} \text{r} \text{ k} \text{ g} \text{w} : \text{h} \text{ n} \text{ i} \text{ j} \text{ p} \text{ i} \text{ r} \text{ s} : \text{t} \text{ b} \text{ e} \text{ m} \text{ l} \text{ n} \text{ g} \text{ d} \text{ o}$

* The order of $\text{i} \text{ p}$ and $\text{d} \text{ o}$ vary.

The late Primitive Norse "futhark" (Stentoften and others):

fu p a(a) r k g w: h n i A j R s: t b e m l d o

Early Viking Age “futhark” (Helnæs and others):

fuparkgw:hniAars:tbml

* Appears only once.

The Gørlev stone's futhark:

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f u p a r k : h n i a s : t b m l r
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THE 16-RUNE FUTHARK OF THE VIKING AGE

Why? Where? When?

Many scholars have racked their brains over the problems involved in the final emergence of the 16-rune futhark [1]. They have often succeeded in muddying the waters still more, chiefly because they have dragged into the discussion all sorts of things that, from the point of view of straightforward alphabet history, are totally irrelevant. And the evolution of alphabets, where letters are altered, old ones discarded, new ones adopted, is a process that obeys constant laws.

There has been confusion, for example, between the alphabet *per se* and the letters actually used – two things that rarely coincide. Danes use neither *q* nor *w* in ordinary writing, and some eschew *x* as well – but they are all in the Danish alphabet. The Etruscans never made use of every letter in the alphabet they borrowed.

An elementary observation in alphabet history is that, irrespective of the number of new letters brought into current use and irrespective of the number of the letters of an alphabet actually employed in writing a language, it is extremely rare that such factors exert any influence on the sequence of the alphabet itself — it needs formal legislation to decree that alteration. Usually, new letters are simply added at the end



Gørlev stone, Sjælland. 220 cm. Retouched photographs. — The inscription provides a “setting up” formula, the 16-letter futhark, the “make good use of” injunction (cf. Nørre Nærá), and a formulaic curse with secret runes. The carver’s ascription is notable because it is in the first person and no name is given: *I* placed the runes right. Finally there is a secondary inscription

- 27 (cf. the Old English alphabet). A series fixed and immovable — is that not a natural state for alphabets whose letters also functioned as numbers and for runes whose position in the sequence was significant for secret and coded writing?

Indeed, it was not at all strange that early scholars — before the Primitive Norse inscriptions were properly known — should strenuously deny that the 16-rune series could possibly be a development from the 24-rune futhark. As a Swedish scholar put it in 1871 [2]: can one imagine anything so fatuous — that people in Scandinavia should, after a time, *first* find certain symbols superfluous and therefore dispense with them until

consisting of two names, cut not long after the main inscription; probably the addition informed the world who was responsible for arranging the monument. The spelling *rispi stin* for expected *raispi stain* has occasioned violent protests and depositions from philologists. The carving was undoubtedly done by the man who inscribed the Nørre Næra stone. Side A is on the right.



only sixteen were left, and *then*, much, much later, find it necessary to invent certain so-called dotted runes to express the very sounds for which they had once possessed symbols – it was too ridiculous! As mentioned, it was Ludvig Wimmer who straightened this out as well and, with the pragmatism and clarity that were typical of this great Danish scholar, demonstrated that the 24-rune alphabet really was the progenitor, the 16-rune alphabet its offspring.

Other scholars explained the 16-letter futhark as a clumsy attempt to re-create an alphabet at a time when the use of runes had long been a thing of the past! Others again saw the

short alphabet as a sign of cultural decadence, the result of Scandinavian isolation from the continental mainland to the south!

Most scholars however have sought the causes for the alphabet reduction in the violent phonological changes of the late Primitive Norse period: but in fact the old alphabet had much better resources for expressing the novel mutation products than the new one had.

Finally, some scholars have caused trouble for themselves and others by introducing a factor which is totally irrelevant in alphabet history: magic! Some signs are supposed to have been so sacred that they simply had to be carried over into the new alphabet, others so unholy – or super-holy – that people simply did not dare to use them! And then it has been found a peculiar and striking fact that the new futhark has 16 runes while the old one had 24 – and both these numbers (sacred of course for one reason or another) are divisible by 8, which was also a sacred number – or so it was claimed.

We can easily side-step all these ill-founded solutions. They were hatched in the brains of scholars – doubtless capable and learned men in their fields – who neglected to inform themselves of the facts of alphabet history. The futhark is an alphabet.

One of the first steps in the development from the long to the short runic alphabet was that ƿ (only known in alphabet inscriptions) and ʃ ĩ and later ɔ ng fell out of use: the Vadstena bracteate inscription already has a kind of b-rune instead of ƿ, and the ĩ-rune is found only in very few reliable (and meaningful) North Germanic inscriptions, including (probably) the one
26 on a roe-deer bone from Caistor-by-Norwich, England, which reads: raīhan = roe(-deer) [3].

Only in the more or less corrupt bracteate texts do we find ʃ at all frequently: and in the nature of things it must always be suspect in them, even when it appears in words that might
26 seem to make sense (e.g. the Dannenberg bracteate. Krause nr 133). In initial position the letter ƿ only occurs in loan-words, i.e. words of non-Germanic origin – if it had existed initially in Germanic languages then the ƿ-rune would doubtless have lived longer.

The ng-rune was seldom used, so seldom that it ultimately went out of fashion, to be replaced by n + g. From the earliest times it was a small square or rectangle (in the early days of runology it was confused with the j-rune). Before leaving the stage it achieved a certain eminence, however, for — like the k-rune — it was perched on an upright stave and became ŋ, in accordance with a tendency generally observable in the evolution of the futhark.

Among the varied forms of the s-rune were some that came dangerously close to that of the j-rune, precisely because of efforts to avoid oblique strokes in favour of vertical ones.

H F R I 4 F * 1 M N X F Y harija? leugar

There is doubt as to what it stands for and even whether it

really is * and not a correction of † to ‡ (or the reverse). Some think — though it cannot be proved and appears rather unlikely — that it represents Harija's personal mark. Harija itself is an excellent Primitive Norse name, corresponding to
 178 Harja on the comb from Vimose. The word *leugar* is a problem because the most natural interpretation would give the meaning "deceitful" (from the root *leug-*, cf. German *lügen*). So scholars have performed various somersaults in trying to get some other sense out of it: but as things are, we must acknowledge that either Harija has a nickname of unknown meaning or his name is in the genitive and we do not comprehend what he owned, though it ought to be the grave or the monument or something like that. (Nothing is gained by reading Aleugar.)

At present, therefore, we cannot count * on the Skåäng stone as part of the history of the a-rune. The first datable object on which it certainly appears for a is the Norwegian *Setre* comb. The inscription is not understood, but the archaeological dating is seventh century. Otherwise we meet it often in the Blekinge group, but in that group we also find that the Istaby stone has an a-rune with the form ʏ — i.e. the j-rune as given
 *101 in the Kylver futhark and used on the Kragehul spearshaft. The use of this j-rune for a on the Istaby stone means that initial j was lost in late Primitive Norse pronunciation, so the rune's name became *ara* instead of *jara* (cf. English *year*, German *Jahr*, against Scandinavian *år*), and consequently the rune automatically got the value a. The futhark now had two a-runes without standardised or distinct values!

137 Like the late Primitive Norse Blekinge group, the earliest Viking Age inscriptions also have * for a, as we have seen, sometimes on its own, sometimes together with †, its successor in the 16-rune futhark, in which † ousts * and the latter becomes available for use as h. On the Gørlev stone × g and ʀ m have also been discarded in favour of ʀ (k, g) and ʁ, and the alphabet now has only 16 characters.

Anyone who looks back in this book and brushes up his alphabet history will nod familiarly at mention of the Greek alphabet reform of 403 BC, a reform which systematised the numerous local alphabets. But it took a very long time to become fully effective — and the same was doubtless true in

Scandinavia too, where the new alphabet (in complete contrast to the Greek) split more or less at once into two variant forms: the Danish 16-rune futhark (as on the Gørlev stone) and the Swedish-Norwegian stut-rune alphabet which is found in inscriptions from as early as c. 800 or at least the ninth century (the stick from Hedeby and the Swedish Sparlösa stone). 158 367

Just as the Greek reform was the result of a wish on the part of sensible people (young people in this case) to reduce a state of much confusion to some orderly system with a view to improving means of communication, so the same factors were at work in Denmark. Set beside the 24-letter futhark, our reform looks at first sight thoroughly radical, but in reality it was no more radical than the Greek when seen in relation to the runes actually in use at the time it was effected: *what was in use was retained, very little new was added.*

In practical terms the simplification was a great advance: both functional and aesthetic aspects were catered for. The reform carried tendencies already operative in Primitive Norse times to their logical conclusion. We observe that every rune has only one main stave, and this stave must be vertical in relation to the direction of the writing. Runes like \times and \sim were inconceivable in the new system, where even the s-rune with its buckled stave is now vertical, unlike the old s ſ . All the runes have the same height, side-strokes rarely go above the head or below the foot of the stave. The runes are ranked like soldiers on parade.

What inspired this reform? We do not know how much or how little our southern neighbours may have meant for the reorganisation, but there is one monument which clearly shows where we should look for cultural links. This is the Snoldelev stone which has two lines of runes that are strikingly – remarkably – different in height, one broad band and one slender. In this we can see a faithful runic imitation of a manner of writing found in Merovingian and Carolingian manuscripts and charters from the reigns of Charles Martel, Pippin the Short and Charles the Great. They often have an opening line of elongated slender characters followed by lines with a stubbier ordinary script [4]. It may be only an accident that it is precisely this stone from Snoldelev which provides our first 158

domestic example of ʁ for m (the stone is damaged but there is enough left of the rune to be sure of the shape), which is not a bad copy of Carolingian minuscule m ʁ. The natural transformation of the old m-rune ʁ into a letter with only one stave would have been ʁ (it actually occurs on younger rune stones), and we can see that in the form ʁ it fought a long hard fight for survival until ʁ finally triumphed.

Where and how Carolingian minuscule script came into being is not known. It happened at the end of the eighth century and it was not long before it superseded the local scripts that flourished in France, Germany and elsewhere. Apart from its grateful clarity, its rapid advance was due to its use in the chancery of Charlemagne's extensive empire. As one of this book's mottoes records, Charlemagne never learned to write, but perhaps even so his writing reform and the whole of his "renaissance" of learning might have helped to bring order into the messy runic alphabets in use in Denmark, that country which gave him so many problems and caused so much turbulence. We simply do not know what may have happened – but war usually means contact. The Snoldelev inscription certainly demonstrates that the rune-writer knew Carolingian writing habits: but he did not know the 16-letter futhark – quite simply because it was not yet born. It came into the world about AD 800 or at the outset of the ninth century – as we
 371 can see from the stick from Hedeby with its fully fledged stut-rune futhark which must itself be the offspring of the reformed Danish runic alphabet. The Snoldelev stone can therefore be dated to the last part of the eighth century.

The source of the inspiration for the change from the 24-letter to the 16-letter futhark and the period in which it took place are one set of problems, the method and principles on which the reform was carried out are another.

The four futharks illustrate the tendencies described in the preceding paragraphs. Then on the basis of extant inscriptions from the early Viking Age (excluding Gørlev with its fully transformed version) we can set up a "new" futhark in which all the runes are vertical, all with one exception have a single

main stave, and all have the same height. Ignoring the old runes which may still occur here and there in these inscriptions, we arrive at the following result:

ƿ Ɔ Ʀ Ʀ ƿ : Ɔ Ƨ | * Ƨ Ƨ Ƨ Ƨ Ƨ Ƨ
f u þ a r k : h n i a s r : t b m l

But this is precisely the futhark we find on the Gørlev stone, only * has not yet replaced Ɔ and Ƨ remains in its old place in the second *æt*, which (like the first *æt*) has six runes while the third has only four; we see further that this “futhark” operates with two a-runes, * and Ƨ.

How elementary then to move the last rune in the second *æt* to the end of the third *æt*, and how simple to replace the only remaining rune with two upright staves, Ɔ, with the single-staved a-rune *, which was already being ousted by Ƨ in any case. This reduces the problem of the formation of the 16-rune futhark to a simple transfer and a single alteration.

This explanation of the transition from the 24- to the 16-letter futhark, offered in terms of straightforward alphabet history, is supported “durch die veränderung der sprache hervorgerufenen veränderungen in den runennamen” (by the change in the names of the runes called forth by changes in the language), as Wimmer said long ago (*Die Runenschrift*, pp. 218 ff.) and as Aslak Liestøl has newly observed (*Saga-Book of the Viking Society* XX 4, 1981, pp. 247–66). It was only to be expected that the names would share in the general linguistic development. That they did so was suggested above in the case of the j-rune, *jara* > *ara*; but the replacement of the e-rune (*ehwar*) by the i-rune, the o-rune (*opila*) by the u-rune, g by k, d by þ, is also to be seen against the same background.

A principle of some interest which can be observed in the transformation of the 24- to a 16-rune futhark suggests inspiration from the Carolingian Empire and Latin writing, just as the Snoldelev inscription does. It is worth noting that, where the 24-rune futhark had two symbols for related sounds but Latin only one (*V* = *v* and *u*), the inventor of the 16-letter futhark followed the Latin practice. Latin managed with a

single letter, V, for *u* and *v*, so the new runic alphabet could also manage with a single u-rune for both *u* and *w*. In the same way a single i-rune is used for the distinct i- and j-runes of the old series (around AD 800 Latin used only i too). The short runic alphabet could further make do with single letters, t and k, for the older alphabet's t and d and k and g respectively. Finally, the u-rune could represent *o* as well as *u* and *w*, while the ancient p-rune had long since been ousted in favour of the b-rune in all positions.

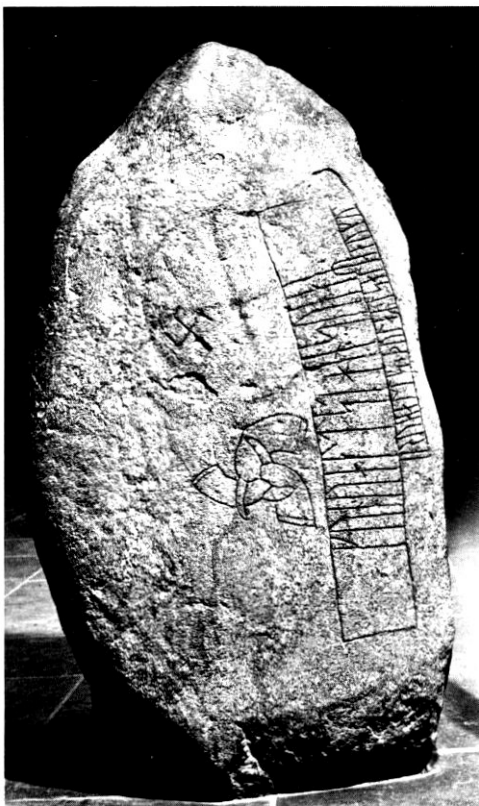
It seems a big leap from the 24-letter to the 16-letter futhark when we do no more than look at the two side by side: but it hardly amounts to a far-reaching reform when all you do is to re-arrange *the runes that were actually in use at the beginning of the Viking Age* — they are the crucial ones — *as an alphabet*. As we have just seen, the reform merely entailed giving an existing but superfluous rune (*) a new value and at the same time moving another rune from one place to another in the series in order to balance the three *æts*. Simpler it could not be, given that one wanted to select only from runes actually in use and was not even prepared to sacrifice either of the two a-runes and the two r-runes.

These two steps constituted the reform whose fiat finally sealed the fate of the old 24-letter futhark — it had nothing to do with mutation or diphthongs or breaking or what have you: the runes in current use were gently reorganised and the alphabet we know from the Gørlev stone created.

Possibly this alphabet was in use for some time before it was made “the law of the land” — why not as the result of the work of a committee established by King Godfred (†810)? (Naturally I speak with every reservation!). It confirmed and “legalised” a development long in progress: in the same way as one of Godfred's successors, Harald Blacktooth, in converting the Danes to Christianity c. AD 960 gave official sanction to a development that had also been long in progress in the nation. But whatever the circumstances of its origin were, the 16-rune futhark lasted more or less unchanged for almost two hundred years, down to the time of Sven Forkbeard (†1014).

It is not too bold to claim that the invention of the Swedish-Norwegian stut-rune futhark was a considerably bigger jump

Snoldelev stone, Sjælland. 125 cm. Retouched photograph. — Gunvald's stone, son of Roald, *thul* in Salløv — but who is the *thul* and what is a *thul* anyway? Perhaps the secular colleague of the *gode*, the priest? The remarkable difference in height between the lines is explained in the text. The swastika and the tri-skele of three drinking horns are of the same date as the inscription but the "sun wheel" is prehistoric. That the inscription is of transitional type is shown by formal features and the use of antique runes. The stone cannot be later than the end of the eighth century — as the text substantiates.



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than the modest step required to achieve the new Danish runic alphabet. The reformed Danish futhark was the final stage of a long evolution; the Swedes seized on it to make an alphabet with quite novel forms.

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NOTES

- 1 Harry Andersen, *Det yngre Runealfabets Oprindelse*, 1947; in *Festskrift Andersen*, 1971, pp. 43 ff. (with bibliography).
- 2 Clas Theodor Odhner, *Om de skandinaviska runornas omedelbara ursprung från det äldsta feniciska alfabetet*, in the *Inbjudningsskrift* issued on the inauguration of Odhner as Professor of History in Lund, 1871.
- 3 Ingrid Sanness Johnsen, *Arkiv f. nord. Fil.* 89, 1974, p. 115.
- 4 Ivar Lindquist, *Religiösa runtexter II. Sparlösa-stenen*, 1940, p. 20.

Rune stones are monuments to the glory of the men who erected them and of the men they commemorate; they are not gravestones lamenting the dead.

The great age of rune stones

Kings, magnates, warriors

The great age of rune stones in Denmark is covered by the reigns of Gorm the Old (c. 950), Harald Blacktooth and Sven Forkbeard; it ebbs away in the time of Knud the Great who, as master of England, paid his disbanded army the last Danegeld in 1018. It is this geld that is commemorated on Swedish rune stones, among them the famous one at Yttergårde (Uppland), raised by Karse and Karlbjørn in memory of their father, Ulv of Borresta: Ulv had shared in three gelds in England, the first Toste paid (*Skqglar-Tósti*, Valkyrie- or Carnage-Toste, as he is called in West Norse sources), the second Thorkel paid (Thorkel the Tall, remembered as a leader of the Jomsborg vikings), the third Knud (the Great) paid [1]. We can thus place this flowering of the rune stone fashion to the period from about 950 to about 1025. The custom was slow to spread and became especially popular only in the years just before and after the conquest of England. Then it seems to have died out quite suddenly. Partly it was because the Viking raids and campaigns were mostly over, partly because the new practice of burying the dead in churchyards and not in mounds by roadside or fording-place gradually prevailed. Burial mounds and rune stones disappear together.

It was different in Sweden. There they went on putting up rune stones until c. 1100 — indeed, the Uppland “explosion” does not begin until about 1050. That means that, in spite of building (wooden) churches and creating cemeteries round them, the Swedes continued to erect memorials out in the countryside, even when the man commemorated was buried in the churchyard. And c.1050 this Swedish custom was adopted on Bornholm as well.

Great (†1035): language, culture, history — they enrich our knowledge of them all. True, while the events recorded and the people named in the inscriptions are as “historical” as any, we usually only make their acquaintance on the rune stones. The men and women are no more than names, and when a stone tells us of a man who died “when kings fought” — the phrase occurs in a Swedish inscription too [2] — we know neither what fight it was nor who the kings were, because chronicled history, the history found in manuscripts, does not inform us. We know equally little about the sea-battle off Udlænge (south of Blekinge) mentioned on the Ny Larsker stone 2 or about the affray at Gårdstånga in Skåne mentioned on a Swedish stone [3].

But in just the period when the rune stone fashion begins to catch on, Denmark also begins to emerge into historical daylight, or at least into a hazy historical dawn. Foreign writers begin to show some interest in the country, and we are given



Egå stone, North Jutland. 110 cm. — Set up by Alvkil and his sons in memory of their kinsman, Manne — “pans uas lantirpi kitils þis nuruna”, i.e. who was land-steward in the service of Ketil the Norwegian. Not all the people concerned with raising a stone and not all the people commemorated are always named, even when men. Here, as on the Glavendrup stone, the sons are anonymous.



Rimso stone, North Jutland. 225 cm. Retouched photograph. — Put up by Thore (on the narrow face) in memory of his mother. He expresses his grief in the bottom line on the broad face: ... ikam : tsrau : mas etc., meaningless words. But read backwards they give the beautiful little verse cited in the text. Did he blush to express his feelings? — The stone stands in the churchyard beside a big mound that has never been investigated. Perhaps his mother is buried there? And was there a churchyard there when the mound was made? Was it thus a Christian mound-burial that the dead lady was given? 190

On the right: Ålum stone 4, North Jutland. 150 cm. Retouched photograph. — Put up by Thyre, wife of the Vigot who commissioned Ålum 3 in memory of his son, Esge. Was Esge Thyre's son too? And is it to him she refers in her inscription, when she says that her "sisterling" — Thorbjørn, the man she commemorates — was dearer to her than her own son? 190

some "historical" background for e.g. the king called Sigtryg and his father Gnupa who are named on two famous stones from Hedeby. Gorm, Harald and Sven become, as it were, more alive for us as we glimpse them through the eyes of foreign chroniclers, even though their portraits are no more rounded as a result. The seething age of warfare in which they lived, so vividly described by the contemporary historians, is furnished with a sombre backcloth by all the rune stones raised

*194 *195

by fathers in memory of young sons and those that tell of men who fared westwards – and never returned. Conditions in Hedeby, the great trading-town south of the River Slie, where the Swedish kings Sigtryg and Gnupa ruled until their power was broken (by the king of the Danes?), are illuminated by the elaborate excavations undertaken there – but no less by the two Haddeby stones. One of them is (partially) inscribed with stut-runes, as are the two rune sticks that have recently come to light there. In his history of the see of Hamburg-Bremen, Adam of Bremen, writing about 1070, relates that Gnupa and Sigtryg were Swedes – the rune stones can tell us that Gnupa had a Danish wife, Asfrid daughter of Odinkar, and it was she who put up both a Danish and a Swedish rune stone in memory of her son by Gnupa, Sigtryg, the last of the Hedeby kings. The inscriptions give us a much clearer idea of what things were like in and around Hedeby, which Sven Forkbeard later besieged and probably destroyed. And would we know that King Gorm survived his queen – contrary to what narrative accounts say – if we did not have the smaller Jelling stone? Or that Harald Blacktooth “made the Danes Christian” by royal edict after he had “won the whole of Denmark for himself”? Would we know that he was called “the Good” and had a wife named Tove, daughter of a prince of the Obotrites, if we did not have his great Jelling stone and the Sønder Vissing stone?

So much for specimens of “straight” history – light is shed on cultural and social history too. We have already been introduced to a heathen *gode* and *thul* – and we shall hear more of the former. Later stones introduce us to kings (the king gives his queen no title but simply refers to her as his wife), to the *drot*, the body of retainers, to women who have the style of *drotning*, the wife of a lord, a lady.

The king needed men to help him govern, protect his country and his rights, administer his lands – from ancient times he was certainly the country’s biggest property-owner: taxes and tolls had to be collected, religious affairs supervised, military dispositions, defensive and offensive, organised. It seems not at all unlikely that Gorm, Harald and Sven kept something like a standing army in their turbulent, violent times. Were the great

circular forts (Trelleborg, Fyrkat and the others [4]) barracks for troops kept on a war footing by Harald (and Sven) – useful too for Harald in maintaining his grip on the Denmark he had newly “won for himself”?

The inscriptions refer to great men whose titles are barely intelligible to us: “land-men” and “estate-men” were not ordinary tillers of the soil and heads of farming households, they were royal officials with important administrative duties [5]. Is it perhaps the buildings of such a “land-man’s” residence that have been excavated at Vorbasse in North Jutland? A series of large establishments on this site show occupation from about the beginning of our era down to c. 1100. A great dwelling-house at Vorbasse can be up to 80 m. long and have a large complex of other buildings associated with it (byres, barns, smithy, foundry, weaving sheds and so on). Finds from the site show contacts with Norway, the Rhineland and the Baltic. About 100 cattle could be stalled and there was correspondingly extensive tillage for corn and pasture. Whatever the title of such a magnate on such a manor, he was no little lord who ruled over people, stock and land in Denmark at that time [6].

We hear further of a king’s *hempægi*, i.e. a man the king had taken into his household; such “home-receivers” must naturally have been part of the king’s “family” and some of them members of his *hird*, his body of sworn retainers. Titles like *þegn* and *drengr* most probably belong in the military sphere, the first used of veterans, the second of younger warriors. The inscriptions also refer to the officers of great men, a *landhirþir* “estate-steward”, “factor” (in the service of Ketil the Norwegian), a *bryti* “overseer”, a *stýrimaðr* “ship’s captain”, a *snípr* “craftsman”. We hear of “partners” (*felagar* – men who put money into a venture together), of “comrades” (men bound together as members of the same group), of “brothers” (belonging to the same fraternity, not necessarily the same family), of “thralls”.

Family pride shines through in many inscriptions – most of all on the Asmild stone – and in this connection it is again worth stressing that the first thing the memorial formula looks after is the name and fame of the man responsible for erecting

- the stone and the monument: A raised this stone in memory of
 206 B, no matter whether it is a king or a subordinate: (Jelling 1)
 *196 King Gorm made this monument in memory of —; (Haddeby 3)
 378 King Sven placed the stone in memory of —; (Ravnkilde 1)
 Asser the land-steward, son of Køge, cut these runes in mem-
 ory of —. The dead man often gets a word or two of identifica-
 tion or commendation as well: his relationship to the man or
 woman who set up the stone, a “good” (honourable, noble)
 “thegn” or “dreng”, a great “un-dastard”, a man “generous
 with food”, and so on. There is rarely any expression of feel-
 ing: one emotional outburst in a verse couplet may be a quota-
 tion but seems nevertheless to have caused some embarrass-
 ment since the man responsible had the words carved back-
 *187 wards. On the imposing *Rimsø stone*, which Thore, Enråde’s
 brother, set up in memory of his dead mother, we read the
 reversed message:

ikam : tsrau : mas : ipua . . . — [mupur is t]aupi sam uarst maki
 Death of a mother is the worst that can happen to a son.

Mopur es døpi
sem wærst megi

- *187 But Thyre on *Ålum stone 4* is not shy of proclaiming her feel-
 ings for her dead cousin (or nephew?):

Ålum stone 4, North Jutland:

purui : uikuts : kunā : lit : risa : stin : þānsi : eftir : purbiurn :
 sun : sibu : sustlik : sin : is hun : hukþi : b(i)tr : þan : suasum :
 suni :

Thyre, Vigot’s wife, had this stone set up in memory of Thor-
 bjørn, Sibbe’s son, her “sisterling”, towards whom she felt more
 kindly than towards a dear son (or: towards a son of her own).

- 240 On *Ålum 3* Vigot’s son is commemorated but we do not know
 whether Thyre was his mother. If she were, she may be saying
 of Thorbjørn that he was dearer to her than even her own son.

- Young warriors express their grief and admiration in lines of
 *191 verse on their dead leader on *Hällestad stone 1* in Skåne, which



Hällestad stone 1, Skåne. Sandstone. Visible height 133 cm. Retouched photographs. — Raised by young fighting men (*drengiar*) in memory of their lord, Toke Gormsson, who did not flee at Uppsala. The inscription ends with a stanza in *fornyrðislag*. The stone has been built into the church wall, upside down. 293

Eskil set up in memory of Toke Gormsson, his “lord gracious to him”. The verse ends the inscription (here normalised):

*Sar flo ægi
at Upsalum.
Sattu drengiaR
æftir sin bropur
sten q biargi
stöpan runum
þer Gorms Toka
gingu næstir*

He fled not
at Uppsala.
Warriors set up
after their brother
the stone on the hill
standing firm with runes.
Toke, Gorm’s son,
they followed nearest.

Similar lines are found on the *Sjörup stone*, Skåne: He fled not at Uppsala but fought while he had weapons.

Inscriptions often end with a stanza which declares that the stone will stand for ages to come (Egtved, Randbøl, Ålum 1, Års, Tillitse, Ny Lars 1, and others).

226 A couple of inscriptions have laudatory expressions in
rhythmic form: Tryggevælde: *Fair wærþa nu | fœddir þem*
*21 *bætri* Few will now be born better than him; Århus 5 (DaRun
6): *Sar do manna | mæst uníþingr* He died of men the greatest
“un-dastard”.

NOTES

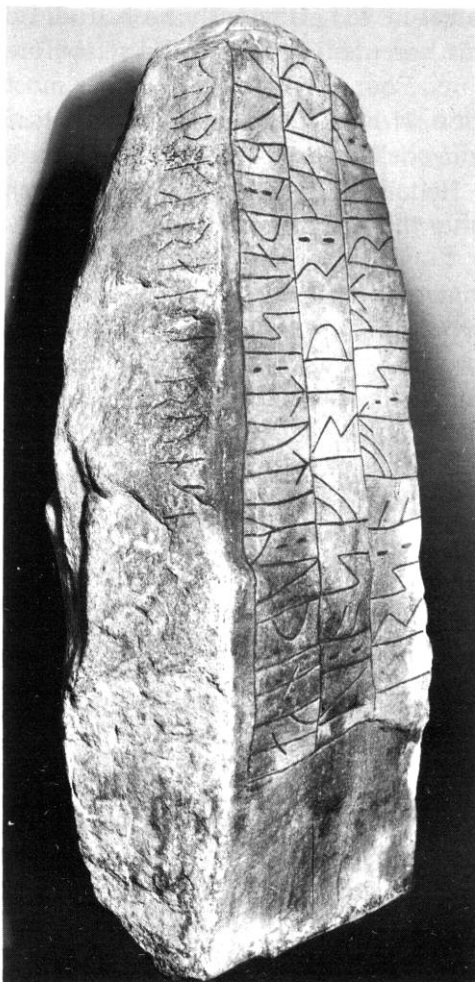
- 1 Cf. also the Norwegian Evje stone in memory of Bjor, who met death i lipi (“in the host” — on a campaign), when Knud attacked England. Lis Jacobsen, in *Norske Oldfunn VI*, 1933.
- 2 The Råda stone, Västergötland; S.B.F. Jansson, *RunSverige*, p. 86.
- 3 The Forsheda stone, Småland, set up by Rolf and Askel in memory of their father, Livsten. He fell at Gårdstånga in Skåne. S.B.F. Jansson, *RunSverige*, p. 86.
- 4 Cf. Fyrkat. En jysk vikingeborg. I. Borgen og bebyggelsen, af Olaf Olsen og Holger Schmidt. II. Oldsagerne og gravpladsen, af Else Roesdahl. København 1977.
- 5 Cf. also K.G. Ljunggren, *Landman och boman i vikingatida källor*, Arkiv f. nord. Fil. 74, 1959, pp. 115 ff. — Differently interpreted by Klaus Düwel, *Runische Zeugnisse zu “Bauer”*, Abhandl. der Akad. der Wiss. in Göttingen, Phil.-Hist. Kl., III. Folge, nr 89, 1975, pp. 180 ff. with a thorough analysis of the material and bibliography.
- 6 Steen Hvass, *Fem års udgravninger i Vorbasse*, Mark og Montre 1977, pp. 27 ff. *Die völkerwanderungszeitliche Siedlung, Vorbasse*, Mitteltjütlund, ActaArchaeol. 49, 1979, pp. 61 ff. and Nationalmuseets arbejdsmark, 1979, pp. 105 ff.

KINGS AND QUEENS

Before we start on the main body of the inscriptions and let the runes themselves speak to us of men and women, their lives and customs, beliefs and deaths, we must find firm chronological ground to stand on, so that we can see when it all happened. Our one assured point in time is provided by the
202 Jelling stones. We know for sure that King Harald (“the Good”)

Blacktooth died at the latest in 987. Obviously he had set up his memorial stone to his parents, Gorm and Thyre, before that – indeed, long before. Four other “royal” stones must be considered in association with the Jelling stones, two older than them and two younger. They are the Haddeby stones 194ff. 1–4, all found close to Hedeby and earlier known by such names as the Hedeby stone, the Vedelspang stones, the Danevirke or Bustorf stone.

Hedeby and Ribe in Denmark, Kaupang in Norway and Birka in Sweden were Scandinavia’s great trading-centres, like Dorestad in Frisia and Novgorod in “Russia”. Hedeby was doubtless the supreme Danish market, situated behind its semicircular ramparts south of the Slie, a nodal point for the transit trade to Sweden and the Baltic regions. Who founded Hedeby? We do not know but to judge by the excavations town life was in full swing there by about AD 800, presumably as a permanent development of what had once been a seasonal market. A stick from Hedeby gives us our first example of the futhark in *Swedish* runes and, along with another stick also with stut-runes from the same place and period, provides conclusive evidence of the presence of Swedes – presumably merchants – in the settlement. But these ancient Hedeby inscriptions may gain deeper significance when seen in the light of Adam of Bremen’s history of the Hamburg bishops (c. 1070 – partly based on what he was told by King Sven Estridsson), in which Denmark plays no small part. Adam reports that a Swedish leader, Olav, conquered Denmark at the beginning of the tenth century, following the death of a King Helge (neither Olav nor Helge is known from other sources). Olav’s sons, *Chnob* (= Gnupa) and *Gurd* (unknown), either ruled with him or succeeded him, and finally *Sigeric* (= Sigtryg, son of Gnupa and Asfrid Odinkar’s daughter) came to the throne. He was ousted by *Hardegon* (unknown) from *Nortmannia* (Norway or Normandy). According to Widukind, who wrote his Saxon chronicle c. 970, a century before Adam and so that much more reliable, Henry I of Saxony invaded Denmark in 934, made the *Danes* pay tribute – something we learn from a contemporary record as well – and forced their king, *Chnuba*, to accept baptism. 371



Haddeby stone 4, South Jutland. 125 cm. Retouched photograph. — Asfrid Odinkar's daughter made this monument (kubl pausi) in memory of King Sigtryg, her son and Gnupa's. Gorm cut the runes. The inscription is almost the same as on Haddeby 2 (on the right), but is carved with Danish runes, Haddeby 2 partially with stut-runes. These two stones are our most ancient "historical" monuments, a little older than the small Jelling stone. They tell of men who ruled in Hedeby, the greatest trading-centre of Viking Age Scandinavia.

That is as far as the narrative sources take us. Let us now look at the rune stones, Haddeby stones 1–4, set up in the immediate neighbourhood of Hedeby. We begin with the two oldest and we at once meet Gnupa and Sigtryg. Haddeby stones 1 and 3 tell of Sven Forkbeard and his siege of Hedeby [1].

Haddeby stone 2 (partially stut-runes), South Jutland:

Face A: *asfriþr : karþi : kum*

Top and face B: *bl · þaun*

Face A continued: *aft : siktriku :*

Haddeby stone 2, South Jutland. 214 cm. Retouched photograph. — Like Haddeby 4 (on the left), this stone was set up by (Queen) Asfrid in memory of (King) Sigtryg, her son and (King) Gnupa's. But unlike Haddeby 4, it is partially cut with Swedish runes. Along with the ninth-century sticks with stut-runes on them, these stones show what a mixture of language and nationality existed in Hedeby, where Gnupa was Swedish, Asfrid Danish. A political marriage? See Sønder Vissing 1.



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370f.

*198

Face B: sun [:] (s)in : æui (error for auk) : knubu
Asfrid made this monument in memory of Sigtryg, her son and Gnupa's.

Haddeby stone 4 (Danish runes), South Jutland:

*194

Face A: : æsfriþr : karþi : kubl : þausi : tutir : upinka|u|rs : aft : siktriuk : k

Top: unu

Face B: k : sun : sin : : auk : knubu :

Face C: kurmr [i] raist [i] run(ar) [i]

Asfrid Odinkar's daughter made this monument in memory of King Sigtryg, her son and Gnupa's. Gorm cut the runes.

Since Haddeby stones 1 and 3, erected two generations later, have the closest connections with Hedeby's fate, we go on to them forthwith:

Haddeby stone 3, South Jutland:

Face A: : suin : kunukR : sati | stin : uftir : skarpa | sin :

himþiga : ias : uas : | : farin : uestr : ian : nu :

Face B: : uarþ : taupr : at : hiþa : bu

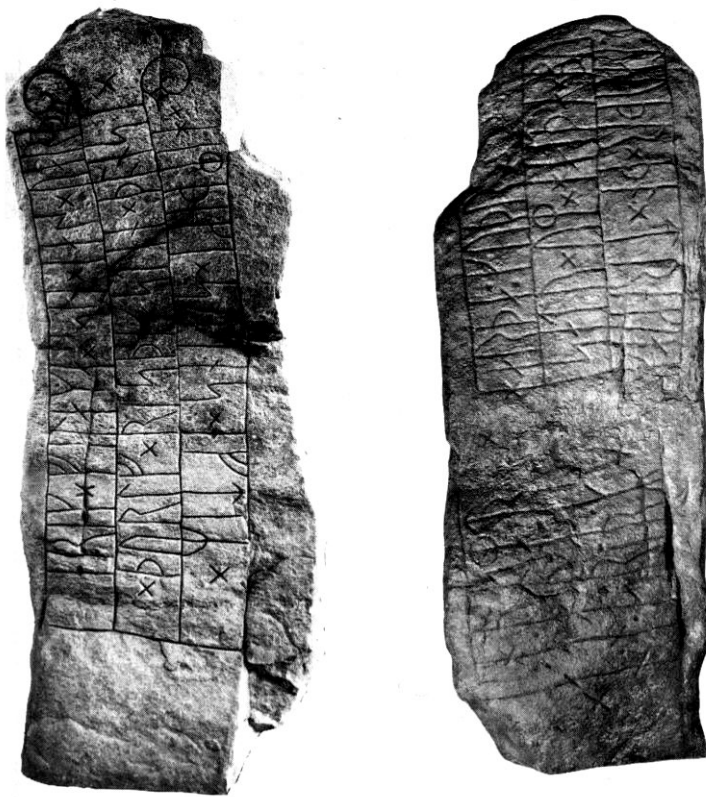
King Sven placed this stone in memory of Skarde, his household-man (*hembægi*) who had fared westward (i.e. on a foray to England or Normandy) and now met death at Hedeby.

*197 *Haddeby stone 1, South Jutland:*

Face A: × þurlf × risþi × stin × þansi × | × himþigi × suins ×
eftir × | erik × filaga × sin × ias × uarþ



Haddeby stone 3, South Jutland (earlier called the Danevirke or Bustorf stone). 158 cm. Retouched photograph. — Raised by Sven Forkbeard to commemorate his retain-er, Skarde, who fell at the siege of Hedeby.



Haddeby stone 1, South Jutland. 210 cm. Retouched photographs. — 196
 Raised by (King) Sven's retainer, Thorulv, in memory of his partner, the *drengR* and ship's captain, Erik, who met death when Sven Fork-beard besieged Hedeby.

Face B: $\text{taupr} \times \text{þa} \times \text{trekiar} \mid \text{satu} \times \text{um} \times \text{haiþa} \times \text{bu} \mid$
 (same-stave runes:) $\times \widehat{\text{ian}} : \widehat{\text{han}} : \widehat{\text{uas}} : \widehat{\text{sturi}} : \widehat{\text{matr}} : \widehat{\text{tregR}} \times \mid \times$
 $\text{harþa} : \text{kupr} \times$

Thorulv, Sven's household-man (*hempægi*), placed this stone in memory of Erik, his partner (*felagi*), who met death when warriors (*drengiar*) besieged Hedeby; and he was a ship's captain, a very noble "dreng".

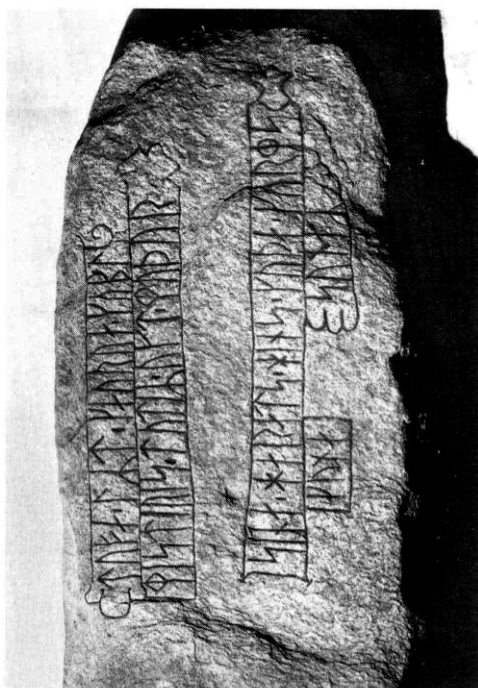
Hedeby is also mentioned in the fragmentary inscription of *Arhus stone 1*, put up by a man with the by-name Thexle (a

kind of axe) in memory of Åmunde, who was probably killed in the same siege.

It was decidedly unhelpful of foreign chroniclers to lose interest so completely in Denmark and Danish affairs in the years around 900. They looked elsewhere of course because there were then no clashes between their nations and the Danes, and foreigners paid no attention to what went on in Denmark unless it concerned them directly. The first “happening” does not occur until 934.

We do not know whether Denmark was a unified kingdom at the end of the ninth century or whether it was still split up into petty kingdoms or lordships, of which Hedeby and its hinterland made one. Referring to the Hedeby realm in this period, a historian has remarked that over the years a host of learned contributors have tried to combine the information provided by literary sources and rune stones to produce a causally connected narrative. The result, he says, has been utter confusion: each scholar has supplemented the sources,

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Sønder Vissing stone 1, North Jutland. 245 cm. Retouched photograph. — Erected by Tove, daughter of the Wendish ruler, Mistivoj, and wife of “Harald the Good Gormsson” (a political match?), in memory of her mother, whose name is not recorded. Unattractive and rustic script and ornament, remarkable for its use of λ for both *R* and *e*.

altered and rejected them, in his own way and come up with his own private explanation – so there are as many opinions as there are scholars. The sober historian must be content to acknowledge that already by Adam of Bremen's time the tradition is off the rails [2]. But in fact if we look dispassionately at the scene, it is difficult not to conclude that Adam's report of the conquest by the Swedish Olav and the succeeding kings, Chnób (= Gnupa) and Sigeric (= Sigtryg), harmonises remarkably well with the runic inscriptions – one of which *was cut by a Swedish carver*. We must also count in the two rune sticks from Hedeby, both with stut-runes and one of them even containing the stut-rune futhark, and both from the ninth century. There are rather too many correspondences for it all to be nonsense. On the other hand, it cannot be right to call Gnupa (and Sigtryg) king of the Danes, for in Gnupa's time Gorm the Old reigned in Jelling: but it is easy to understand that Saxon and Frankish chroniclers believed that the King Gnupa defeated by Henry I in 934 was king of the Danes, because he held sway in Hedeby, a frontier settlement and the most important town in Denmark.

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We can make nothing of Adam's Gurd except note that he has a good Scandinavian name (Gyrd), and the same must be said of Hardegón (= Hardegúnni?) who came from Nortmannia and deprived Sigtryg of the (Hedeby) realm – unless it is a corruption of the name Adam once uses with reference to Gorm the Old, when he calls him Hardecnudth Vurm, i.e. Hardeknud Gorm. But according to Lis Jacobsen (in *Svenske-vældets Fald*), this identification is certainly out of the question, for she plausibly suggests that a *filii* has been lost and Gorm should properly appear as Hardeknud's son. The name Hardeknud gives a clue to the country of origin of the Gorm dynasty – it was not England or Normandy or Norway – but that is another matter and I shall not pursue it here.

Making cautious use of these four runic inscriptions and the archaeological and literary sources, we can sketch the following picture of events in Hedeby c. 900 and later. What happened after King Gudfred's death way back in 810 we cannot say; but on the death of one of his successors, Helge, South Jutland with its important trading-centre Hedeby was invaded by a

Swedish "host" (*lip*) under the leadership of Olav who either had or assumed the title of king (his grandson, Sigtryg, had this title). Swedish sovereignty lasted for at least three generations (perhaps four — Gyrd?). In 934 Gnupa (who, judging by the sources, was Olav's son) was defeated by the German emperor, Henry I, forced to pay tribute and to accept baptism. His son, Sigtryg, ruled after him but not for long and he was still a young man when he was killed. Relations between the Swedish King Gnupa and the Danes must have been marked by mutual respect, since Gnupa made a — probably political — marriage with Asfrid, daughter of a prominent Danish magnate, Odinkar. Perhaps it was merely a pact of non-belligerence between the two sides. Asfrid survived both her husband and her son. She alone erected the memorials to King Sigtryg and that must mean that Gnupa was dead. Was that soon after 934 — our only concrete date — and how many were the "few" years of Sigtryg's reign? But if we date Asfrid's two rune stones to the years a bit before 950 we cannot be far wrong.

We do not know Hardegunni, who vanquished Sigtryg. On the big Jelling stone Harald Blacktooth announces that he won the whole of Denmark for himself. Did Hedeby belong to his Denmark? The facts — in the shape of the two younger Haddeby stones — tell us that his son, Sven Forkbeard, besieged Hedeby, so the town was not in Danish possession in his time. It fell into their hands then, but as a smoking ruin — and since then the great trading-centre has lain north of the Slie and been called Slesvig. The historians can fill out the dramatic sequence of events: 'about 974 Hedeby was taken by Emperor Otto II (973-983); but in 982 the Danes captured the fortress Otto had built in the march-country and later took the offensive and ravaged Hamburg with fire. If this is to be believed, then 982 is the year when Sven's *drengiar* besieged Hedeby, and it was in this year or very soon afterwards that Haddeby stones 1 and 3 were raised. In between the dates of the two pairs of Haddeby stones the two Jelling stones were set up.

If we examine the spellings and forms on the four Haddeby stones, we discover certain characteristic developments that are typical of the post-Jelling period represented by Haddeby 1 and 3. First, we find dotted runes (which Sven's carvers must

have got to know in England), e in uestr, eftir, erik, etc., and the extended form of the preposition uftir, eftir, instead of the short forms, uft, aft, ift, which have hitherto been universally used. Haddeby 1 has the cross-shaped division mark. All these are young features. We note that the carver of the king's stone, Haddeby 3, goes so far as to write hipa bu, while Haddeby 1 has the conservative haiþa bu (another warning not to draw hasty conclusions about chronology or language from orthography alone). Both inscriptions have the up-to-date spelling suin (earlier suain) and stin (not stain), but equally the old-fashioned tauþr (not tuþr). The forms ias (= æs) and uas are also conservative, since other contemporary inscriptions show iar (= ær) and uar. All four stones have their lines arranged in more or less regular boustrophedon order; the only ornament, modest at that, is on Haddeby 1, the characteristic spiral of the "Jelling style".

The linguistic details just mentioned provide examples that can help us to date a runic inscription, to decide whether it belongs *typologically* to the Jelling or to the post-Jelling group. On the other hand, it can never be said too often that newer forms in an inscription do not necessarily mean that it was written later than one with older forms. Just as there are spelling conservatives and radicals today, so both kinds existed in the ranks of the rune-writers. If we must put dates to the Jelling group, the span must be as wide as from c. 900 to c. 985.



Jelling monument, North Jutland. Danish Air Force photograph (DaRun fig. 112). The burial mound of Gorm and Thyre is north of the church (on the left of the picture), Harald's empty memorial mound to the south (on the right of the picture). This picture was taken before E. Dyggve's excavations. The surroundings are now radically different, many buildings demolished to give clear access to the burial mound.

THE JELLING MONUMENT

Gorm and Harald the Good

The first of the two kings named above is Gorm the Old – who is referred to by Adam of Bremen as Hardecnudth Vurm, that is filius Hardecnudth Gorm (Gorm H.s son, cf. Lis Jacobsen, *Svenskevældets Fald*, pp. 23 ff.). The second king is Harald Blacktooth, to whose name the cognomen “the Good” is attached on Sønder Vissing stone 1, a stone erected by Harald's queen, Tove (otherwise unknown), daughter of Mistivoj, prince of the Obotrites, in memory of her mother. The script has a notable feature, taken to be a Swedish touch, inasmuch as the carver uses the R-rune ᚱ for e (transliterated E below) as well as for R (tutir).

Sønder Vissing stone I, North Jutland:

tufa | læt | kaurua | kubl | mistiuu | tutir | uft | muþur | sina |
kuna harats | hins | kuþa | kurms | sunar

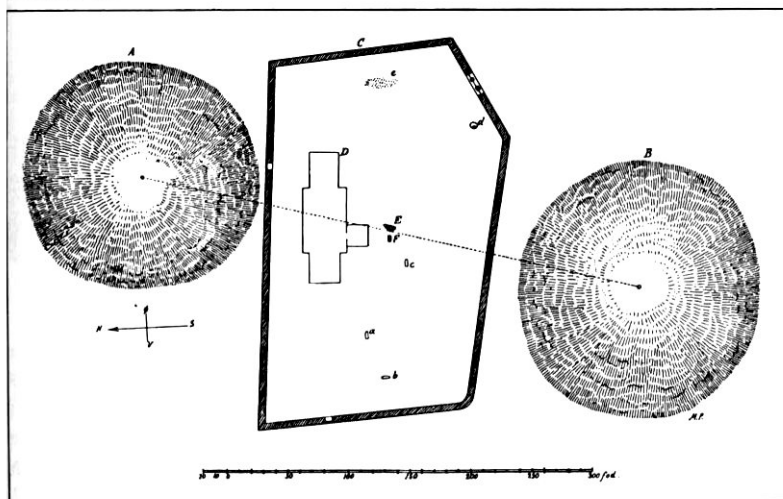
Tove, Mistivoj's daughter, wife of Harald the Good Gorm's son, had this monument made in memory of her mother.

The inscription has a spelling mistake (harats) and a correction (kuna – see the illustration). Neither script nor decoration look very professional.

Since kuna is in the nominative, it must go with Tove, who had the monument made, so it is she who was the wife of Harald. The king we know as “Blacktooth” is here called “the Good” – that may remind us of Adam of Bremen's description of him as *mitissimus*, “very mild”.

Before we go on to the two Jelling stones it may just be mentioned that another stone is known that has some connection with Gorm-Harald. This is the *Sønder Vilstrup stone* of which we have only a fragment containing the runes . . . bl þisi but whose inscription can be partly reconstructed with the aid of some old sketches:

Jelling monument, North Jutland. A plan prepared by Wimmer, DRM. E and F mark the two rune stones.





- 206 Jelling stone 1, North Jutland. 140 cm. Retouched photographs. — Raised by Gorm the Old in memory of his “wife”, Thyre, Denmark’s adornment. Only a subordinate could speak of his *drotning* (modern) *dronning* “queen”), i.e. his lord’s wife, his lady. Both the runes and the framing lines on face A are very irregular. The carver did not sketch in the runes before he started to cut them.



[. . . lit + ku]bl + pisi + | [kaurua + haralt . . . rm . . .]
 NN had this monument made, Harald . . . Gorm (?)

A word in the third line may possibly be read as *faþur* and if the inscription ends (as is far from certain) with *is hana ati*,



- 207 Jelling stone 2, North Jutland. Face A, the inscription side. 140 x 110 cm. Retouched photo. — The biggest and most magnificent rune block in Scandinavia, “Denmark’s baptismal certificate”, enmeshed in Christian symbols (two symbols of the Trinity flank the top line). Set up in the 960s in memory of Gorm and Thyre by their son, Harald (Blacktooth the Good), who won the whole of Denmark for himself and made the Danes Christian. In ornament and runic script a unified work of art and a literary masterpiece — a monument worthy of a great king.

who had her to wife, then this stone too was put up by a woman.

*204 *205 *Jelling stone 1* (Gorm’s stone, the small Jelling stone), North Jutland:

: kurmr : kunukr : | : k[ar]pi : kubl : þusi : | : aft : þurui :
kunu || : sina : tanmarkar : but :

King Gorm made this monument in memory of Thorvi (Thyre), his wife, Denmark’s adornment.

Jelling stone 2 (Harald's stone, the great Jelling stone), North Jutland: *206 *208f

Face A (the inscription side). : haraltr : kunukr : þaþ : kaurua |
kubl : þausi : aft : kurmfapursin | aukaft : þaurui : muþur :
sina : sa | haraltr [:] ias : saꝛ · uan · tanmaurk

Face B (the beast side): ala · auknuruiaik

Face C (the Christ side): auk(ta)ni(karþi)kristna

King Harald commanded this monument to be made in memory of Gorm, his father, and in memory of Thorvi (Thyre), his mother — that Harald who won the whole of Denmark for himself, and Norway and made the Danes Christian [3].

Gorm's carver was no genius. On face A he first made a four-sided frame, but using the stone's own edge as the right-hand line, and then divided the field into three broad bands to take the runes. But see how irregular they are — big and quite handsome in the first line (on the left), smaller in the middle, but then he has to leave plenty of room between the last runes because he was too mean with his spacing at the start. The same thing happens in line 3. In other words, he did not take the trouble to chalk out the runes but simply began chipping away at the stone.

The inscription is clear enough, both the runes — even though some are damaged — and the message. In 1927 Hans Brix got the unhappy idea that “tanmarkar : but” referred not to Thyre but to Gorm, and after a violent bout of polemics in books and newspapers, this “discovery” found its way into Danmarks Runeindskrifter published by Lis Jacobsen and me in 1942. But thanks be to Odin and Thor, our young collaborator at that time, Karl Martin Nielsen [4], soon put things straight by proving that the word *bót* certainly went with Thyre and had nothing to do with the Danevirke and Denmark's “repair” — it is a term of praise, comparable to Old Norse *bekkjarbót*, an adornment of the bench (referring to a girl), and quite simply describes Thyre as an ornament of the Danish realm (because of her beauty or merits or both). Towards the end of the twelfth century Sven Aggesen called her *decus Datie*.

The historians know little about Gorm. Adam of Bremen says that Bishop Unni (919–936) visited him to get permission



207 Jelling stone 2, North Jutland. Retouched photograph. — Face B with the “Jelling beast”, symbol of paganism, wreathed round by a serpent (who ejected us from the Garden of Eden, after all, so the two monsters are not in combat, as so often assumed, but represent the same evil). The snake may be biting its own tail. In the bottom left-hand corner is a symbol of the Trinity, the sacred triquetra.

to undertake missionary work in Denmark but was cold-shouldered (which presumably allows us to conclude that Gorm was a steadfast adherent of the old faith). Harald, on the other hand, is said to have given Unni leave to send priests to Denmark. If this is correct, it means that Gorm was resident in



Jelling stone 2, North Jutland. Face C, the Christ side. Retouched photograph. — Scandinavia's oldest portrayal of Christ. The large ring around his waist — the counterpart of the serpent round the "beast" — possibly symbolises the circle of heaven and earth. Four symbols of the Trinity are seen on either side of the head and feet, and a fifth in the bottom right-hand corner.

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Jelling before Unni's death in 936 and that Harald was by then of an age to make his influence felt (as co-regent?). But modern historians do not give much credit to these reports. Adam must however have had documentary sources for this in the cathedral archives. He may well exaggerate and embroider

the results of the mission, but the visit of the archbishop to the Danish king cannot be pure invention. This conclusion seems particularly reasonable when we see that the report accords well with what we know about Gorm (a pagan, cf. below) and Harald (a Christian). One can carry scepticism too far and on this question historians often seem a little hasty in their judgments.

Gorm's inscription speaks of *kubl þusi* – literally, these monuments – and what that implies will be considered more closely in connection with Harald's stone.

The great Jelling stone 2 has also taken an intellectual battering and suffered from various kinds of misunderstanding. It has been maintained that the handsomely proportioned inscription and the decorative elements were made in two stages, and that the man called in to do the second stage of the work was a cackhanded bungler. How wrong all this is I have shown elsewhere [5], and here I shall do no more than point out the remarkable (“empty”) line which runs across the bottom on the Christ side (face C) and continues on the inscription side (face A). This line has no runes and was never intended to have runes. It was meant by the master-mason (i.e. the designer of the stone's whole lay-out) as a datum line to show both how deep in the earth the stone should be set and how the stone should be levelled up. This has now been fully demonstrated by Knud Krogh's excavation, which has shown that the stone, whose underneath is all flat and smooth, stands on its original site, plumb in the middle between the two mounds.

Casper Markdanner, governor of Koldinghus, became interested in this ancient monument at Jelling as early as 1586 and had it dug up (which probably means he had the earth shovelled away around it – in the course of centuries the ground level in a churchyard can rise by about a metre). He also put up a plaque in the church with a reading of part of the inscription on it [6]: thanks to this plaque (subsequently burnt) Jelling 2 was one of the first rune stones to lead a literary life in Europe.

What is the significance of the three good deeds mentioned by Harald on this stone in honour of his mother and father?



Jelling stone 2, North Jutland. Face B and C. Confrontation of pagan and Christian as so often on romanesque church portals throughout Europe, symbolised by the “Jelling beast”, a fabulous monster wreathed by a serpent, and the “White Christ” with the circle symbolising the Universe (?) round his waist and four symbols of the Trinity at head and feet. — Both the relief carving and the tightly organised symbolism were novelties in Scandinavia. A photograph from 1919 by Anna Andersen, Jelling.

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When did he have the stone set up? When did he complete the whole memorial complex? And what does *kubl pausi* mean on *his* stone?

It must be admitted that the early historians are not much help. First, they believed that Gorm died before Thyre. (The old story has it that Thyre draped the hall in black because she had heard of the death of Knud Danaást, Knud Denmark’s love, their son — and Gorm had promised to kill anyone who

brought him the message of his favourite son's death. When Gorm saw the black hangings, he said, "Then Knud is dead;" and Thyre: "You said it, Lord, not I.") But the small Jelling stone shows that, on the contrary, it was Gorm who outlived Thyre and erected the stone as a memorial to her. — We do not know either precisely what "won the whole of Denmark for himself" means, still less the reference to the conquest of Norway, and the exact date of Harald's baptism also escapes us. Still, historians nowadays are able to fix the official conversion of the Danes with a high degree of confidence to the years around 960 [7].

This most important of Danish historical documents — Denmark's baptismal certificate, as it has been called — is not a bit of parchment or paper written by any old annalist, but the biggest lump of rock that could be obtained, carved by royal command, and reporting three events that must have been public knowledge to every citizen of the realm: everyone who could read runes could check the truth of what he read, the three claims that Harald had won the whole of Denmark for himself, and Norway and had (about AD 960) made the Danes Christian. The order of the statements must give the chronological sequence. First Harald wins the whole of Denmark — whatever that implies. As a national entity Denmark, the land of the Danes, had existed at least since the ninth century. We know that from the accounts of the voyages of Ohthere (Öttarr) and Wulfstan which the learned Alfred the Great, king of Wessex, included in his Old English version of Orosius. It appears from them that Jutland (including South Jutland and Hedeby) and the islands and Skåne were counted Danish, while Bornholm then had a king of its own. The Jutlanders were called South Danes, the people of the islands and Skåne North Danes. We further know that c. 800 the king of the Danes was Godfred, the only man who successfully defied Charlemagne. He had succeeded his father, Sigfred, and was in turn succeeded by his brother's son, Hemming, who made peace with the Franks on the banks of the Ejder in 811. Denmark and Danish kings are perfectly "historical" from before AD 800 — but we have no record of the name Denmark until Gorm's rune stone. — Rulers could change quickly in those days and much may

have happened in the “dark” years around AD 900, when foreign historians are silent on the subject of Danish affairs. Something certainly happened in Hedeby. Our ignorance of Danish conditions in the years preceding Gorm’s reign means we can say nothing at all definite about the significance of “won the whole of Denmark for himself”. Does it tell us that Harald crushed petty kings who made his sole kingship a bone of contention, or did he just win over the Jutlanders, the islanders, the Scanians to acknowledge his authority?

In any case, when he had in some way or other made himself master of all Denmark – but obviously not before that – he could turn his attention to Norway, whose ruler, the mighty Jarl Håkon of Lade, now became Harald’s viceroy. Having imposed himself on the Norwegians, he now had time to spare for his own baptism (though it may have happened long before) and for the introduction of the new faith as the official religion of the Danes – and that took place about 960. Harald’s Jelling stone must have been set up very soon after that date – as it befits a king to erect a monument with all speed in honour of those who brought him into the world. We do not know when Gorm died (Harald’s death fell, as we noted, in 987 at the latest), or whether Harald was co-regent with his father, or for how long if he was, or whether Harald’s first two achievements belong to the years before or after his father’s death. All we know is that Harald made his monument to commemorate his dead father and must have done so as soon as he possibly could. What precisely did the monument consist of? What does the word *kumbl* mean?

Let us look first at Gorm’s *kumbl* in honour of Thyre. The basic sense of the word, as we have seen, is “sign, token”. Gorm’s memorial “tokens” comprised first the rune stone itself and then a grave-mound which he started but did not finish – did not close it, that is – for it was ultimately to house him as well as the queen (like the Gunderup inscription 1 which says: they both lie in this mound). That mound is the north mound in the churchyard at Jelling. It enclosed a timber-built double grave-chamber, which was discovered in 1820 when the parishioners were trying to find out why the “pond” in the depression at the top of the mound – where they got

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water for their coffee and suchlike – had suddenly dried up. In the chamber, 11 ells long and divided down the middle by a plank set on edge, were found no human remains but the rotten remains of a wooden chest, a little human figure carved in wood and a few other fragments. There were some bits of wood painted in yellow, black and red which “appear to have been fixed for decoration to the ceiling and walls” of the chamber; and near the entrance was found the famous little silver cup which has given its name to the Jelling art-style and which is therefore probably rather older than objects contemporary with Gorm’s burial and the great Jelling stone itself (whose decoration is in the so-called Mammen style). Its position by the entrance has been taken to mean that the cup (which is not a sacred chalice but the equivalent of a snaps glass) was dropped when the grave was plundered. When the local peasants were digging in 1820, they discovered that someone at some time had ruthlessly forced a way through the overlying layer of granite lumps and the roofing beams of the chamber. Such a grave-robbery could only have been undertaken by an armed band of some size – unless of course it had official sanction – but where would one expect to find treasure if not in the burial mound of a king and queen? [8]

The mound was excavated again in 1861 and a new investigation made in 1967 (by E. Dyggve) [9]. Trenches were also dug through the south mound where no grave chamber was discovered but two lines of standing stones (some of them had been toppled over). From the mound they radiated like spokes from a hub and their continuation would make tangents to the north (burial) mound. An analysis of the lichen and other growth on these buried stones showed it was not more than 20–30 years old. That means that the standing stones, which were put there in association with the grave mound which Gorm built for Thyre (and himself), had led an open-air life for a bare generation. The stone rows were then cashiered and partly covered by the empty south mound which Harald Blacktooth built in connection with *his* rune stone. In building his southern mound, which must have been intended as a memorial to his parents, Harald consciously – insofar as we can believe the evidence of the micro-vegetation just men-

tioned – destroyed the *kumbl* which his father Gorm had created as a memorial and dignified resting-place for himself and his queen. Now we begin to see the outlines of the two Jelling monuments and their relation to each other: Gorm's *kumbl*, his "death memorials", consisted of at least three things: (1) his rune stone; (2) the north mound with its grave-chamber; and (3) a stone setting which appears to have consisted of two rows of standing stones flanking either side of the mound and converging on a point to the south – though some people have argued that it was a vast stone-setting with sides of more or less equal length and nearest to being a parallelogram [10]. The gravedigger told Magnus-Petersen, the antiquarian draughtsman, where he had dug out stones that resembled standing stones and Magnus-Petersen entered these on a sketch which is now unfortunately lost. In his memoirs, however, he says that he could prove from his measurements that the stone setting must either have been a parallelogram or shaped like a ship as at Glavendrup.

How did Harald improve on this? His monument certainly consisted of two parts: (1) his great rune stone and (2) the empty memorial mound, a cenotaph – the south mound. Under the present church at Jelling, however, three timber churches have been discovered, the oldest of which must go back to Harald Blacktooth's time – and it is a question whether this church did not also make part of his *kumbl*. In any case, it means that *kumbl* in the plural means neither grave nor stone setting alone but a monument complex which might consist of several items: rune stone, stone setting, grave mound or cenotaph mound, a surrounding wall or fence, a church, and possibly more. Not that they would combine the whole lot, of course, but enough of them to show clearly what the site was, a burial place or a memorial (for the dead man might have died and been interred far from his home – see the Valleberga stone in Skåne), consecrated with suitable rites to ensure its protection and to make it a comfortable home for the use of the occupant – we remember the Gørlev and Nørre Næra inscriptions (and compare the caption to the picture of the Verring stone) [11].

Where the word *kumbl* is used in the singular, on the other

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158 157 hand, as at Gørlev and Nærå (and probably at Starup too), it
 *33 must signify a single element, viz. the grave (grave-mound)
 marked by a rune stone. In this case, the rune stone is the
 visible sign of the ritual that made the grave a serviceable
 dwelling-place for the dead – grave and stone make one monu-
 ment. It accords with the significance here found for *kumbl*,
 singular and plural, that the verb *gørwa* is used: a monument
 or monument-complex was *made*. The use of the verb *sætia*, to
 place, must especially refer to placing stones to make a pattern,
 and when, for example, a Bornholm inscription (Vester Marie
 1) says *raistu kumbl þitsi*, they raised this monument, then the
 word *kumbl* has come to mean simply (rune) stone.

But the grave goods (cf. note 8) found in Gorm's and Thyre's
 mound and the fact that Harald consciously destroyed his
 father's stone setting create new problems. To solve them we
 must look at the decoration of the great Jelling stone. The two
 figures are most striking: Christ on one side, portrayed with a
 nimbus with a cross, clothed and with outstretched arms (but
 not a crucified Christ – what were the chances of persuading
 Vikings to worship a crucified criminal?), surrounded by sym-
 bols of the Trinity in the shape of four triquetras, one on each
 side of his head and two at his feet, and a great ring around his
 waist (the span of heaven and earth?). And on the other side,
 a fabulous beast with a head like a gryphon and the body of a
 beast of prey, stylised with large acanthus leaves and wreathed

The Jelling man, a wooden manikin, 15 cm, found in the grave-chamber
 of Gorm and Thyre in the north mound, one of the few sad remnants left
 after the grave was plundered by Viking marauders. It was painted in
 red, yellow and black, and had been intended to be viewed on both sides
 – presumably in a lattice work or some piece of furniture. In style and
 execution it corresponds closely to Harald's rune stone, with a large
 triquetra – symbol of the Trinity – on the upper torso and a large circle
 – like that on the Christ of the rune stone – round the waist. Is the ma-
 nikin also a Christ figure? – and evidence that Harald gave his pagan
 parents some Christian tokens in their burial chamber to ease their pas-
 sage heavenward (in the same way as Christian descendants might later
 “cross” – mark with a carved cross – the rune stones of their pagan
 ancestors). Could the king, who was himself Christian and proclaimed
 that he had “made the Danes Christian”, neglect to give his own mother
 and father a Christian burial?



by (not in combat with) a serpent which perhaps bites its own tail. There can be no doubt but that this symbolically models the opposition between good and evil, between heaven and hell – an opposition that recurs over and over again in European romanesque sculpture, on church portals and baptismal fonts. This “permanent” programme can hardly have been dreamt up by Harald’s compatriots but must have come from the country which was the source of his baptism and his Christianity, i.e. from the Germany of Otto I, the homeland of St Ansgar, the Apostle of the North. This antique Christian theme was put into the hands of Harald’s “court artists” and they collaborated to create his magnificent stone. But since the inscription is horizontal, contrary to all Danish tradition, and since the carving in relief – albeit only in flat relief – is an utter novelty, it seems likely that the contribution of the Danish master-craftsmen was restricted to the runic lettering.

The triquetra symbol mentioned above, occurring above and below the Christ figure, is found again in large size at the bottom right-hand of the same side, at the bottom left-hand of the beast’s side and in smaller size on either side of the top line of the inscription face. Thus the whole stone is enmeshed by these sacred symbols, well known from early Christian churches. The symbol is used for purely ornamental purposes on south Scandinavian metal objects from the seventh and eighth centuries, 350 it is found on the Hemdrup stick from the ninth century, and on the famous silver-inlaid Mammen axe, which is more or less contemporary with the Jelling stone. On the axe, however, – and on the Hemdrup stick – it is used in pagan fashion as a magic, safeguarding sign in company with another Christian mark, the so-called tetragram, and also with the “mask” which we shall later get to know as the most potent form of protection on heathen rune stones. What we have is thus a typical phenomenon of transition: the man who planned the adornment of the Mammen axe was anxious to be on good terms with both Thor and White Christ – just like the people who acquired both a cross and a Thor’s hammer to wear. There were people who wore both belt and braces then too (cf. below on 223 245 Heathendom and Christianity, where more examples of a similar mixture of beliefs are given) [12].

But on the Jelling stone there can be no doubt of the serious Christian meaning of the triquetra, so intimate its association is with the Christ figure. And now the fun starts: the little wooden manikin, painted red, yellow and black, found among the scanty remains of Gorm's and Thyre's plundered grave-goods, has a large triquetra on his back, and around his waist he has the same outsize ring as the Christ figure on the stone. If he does not represent Christ himself, he is at any rate a Christian character. But that implies that Harald put Christian objects into his heathen parents' grave-chamber (of course, we do not know what faith Thyre may have had) – and that in turn fits in neatly with the fact that he also destroyed his father's heathen stone setting by planting his (empty) southern mound on top of it: so that in the end the old Odin worshipper had not where to lay his grey-haired heathen head.

But the empty mound – was that not a heathen element as well? Not at all for, like the custom of mound-burial itself, such a cenotaph remained a respectable form of memorial long after Christianity was introduced into Denmark. A generation and more after the south mound at Jelling was built, a Christian in Skåne commissioned the Fuglie stone 1 in memory of his brother who had died (and was presumably buried) on Gotland, and firmly placed it on top of an (older) mound. Rather later again two other Scanians, two men or a man and woman, made their Valleberga monument (*kumbl*) in memory of two men who were buried in London. The custom was slow to die.

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It is thus clear that the king who “made the Danes Christian”, and built a super-Christian monument for his parents, could not leave them lying in a heathen grave but must do something about it – it was important not to make their path to heaven narrower than need be. Converted pagans sometimes cut a cross on rune stones long since raised to commemorate dead kinsmen (e.g. Holmby) – a practice roundly cursed by the Swedish Saleby inscription – and in the same way Harald christened the originally pagan grave of his mother and father.

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Are there parallels for such a “conversion” of a mound-burial? We must bear in mind that, as long as there were no churchyards, there was nothing specifically pagan about burial in mounds: it had long existed – though rare in Denmark in

the Viking Age – as an appropriate form of burial for high-born members of society. *What was heathen in Gorm's monument was the stone setting* – and that was what Harald destroyed. Possible parallels to the great Jelling example may be found in the grave mounds that exist in churchyards. But only excavation (for example at Hårlev on Sjælland and Rimsø in Jutland) will show whether they are the resting-places of great men whose heirs honoured their memory with a *kumbl* which, as perhaps at Jelling, included a church.

- *₂₂₁ *The third Jelling stone* has no connection with the two royal monuments.

*247 Before we turn from kings and queens, there is another inscription to consider. In DaRun it is said to be on Århus stone 4 but it should be *Århus stone 3* (because †Århus 2 in DaRun is in reality identical with Århus 1). The stone has a terrifying mask on it and the following inscription is spread over its three sides:

Arhus stone 3 (= DaRun Århus 4), North Jutland:

x kunulfR x auk x augutr x auk x aslaxR x auk x rulfR x rispu ||
x stin x þansi x eftir x ful x fela(k)a x sin x || x iar x uarp ...
y?? x tuþr x || þa x kunukar x | barþusk x

Gunulv and Øgot and Aslak and Rolf set up this stone in memory of Ful, their partner. He met death . . . when kings fought.

The stone was carved later than those of Gnupa, Gorm and Harald – indeed, the unnasalised initial *a* in *aslakr* makes it (typologically) younger than Haddeby 1 raised in memory of a retainer of Sven Forkbeard. It must belong to the years immediately before or around AD 1000, a date to which the great mask also assigns it – assuming we are justified in believing that all the runic picture stones we know belong to a generation or two around the turn of the millennium. Harald's great Jelling stone is the unique exception.

Jelling stone 3, North
Jutland. 65 cm. Retouch-
ed photograph. — Only
the right-hand line of the
inscription can be certain-
ly read: b(a)si : karpi :
kubl — (Basse) made
(this) monument ... This
little stone, found in the
wall of the churchyard in
1964, can have no con-
nection with the two
royal stones.



There is another pointer to the same dating. On a Swedish
runestone, at *Råda*, Västergötland, we read:

þurkil † sati + stin + þasi + itir + kuna + sun · sin + ir · uarþ
+ tuþr + i uristu + ir · bþiþus + kunukar

Thorkel placed this stone in memory of Gunne, his son, who
met death in battle when kings fought [13].

The inscription and decoration suggest a date around 1000 for
this stone too, and it is consequently reasonable to suppose
that the Danish and Swedish stones each commemorate the
same event. In the ninth and early tenth century one might
take the word “king” as a “poetic” or “generalised” title, sig-

nifying a Viking leader, a “sea-king” – but that is out of the question around 1000 when “national” kings reigned in all three of the Scandinavian countries and had done for generations. “When kings fought” must refer to some famous battle in which more than one major monarch was engaged. We know only the battle of Svold in AD 999 (1000?), when Sven Forkbeard, king of the Danes, and Olav, king of the Swedes, pit themselves against Olav Tryggvason, king of the Norwegians, with unhappy results for the last. There may have been other battles between kings that have found no record in the sources (Knud the Great’s victory at Helgeå in 1025, when he overcame King Anund Jakob of Sweden and King Olav Haraldsson of Norway, is decidedly too late to be considered); but the battle at the mysterious unlocated site called Svold appears a distinct possibility.

NOTES

- 1 Aksel E. Christensen and Erik Moltke, Hvilken (kong) Svend belejrede Hedeby? A paper presented in 1949 and published in 1971 in *HistTidsskr.* 12 R., V, pp. 297 ff.
- 2 Aksel E. Christensen, *Vikingetidens Danmark*, 1969, p. 201.
- 3 As long ago as 1941 Gudmund Schütte maintained that the grand end of the Jelling 2 inscription is in “alliterative verse though admittedly not fully correct in form”. The same idea is again launched by Niels Åge Nielsen (*Mediaeval Scandinavia* 1974, p. 182), who baldly states that the conclusion is in *fornyrðislag*. It may be so. But it is worth remarking that, where everything else is of such an outstandingly high standard, one might have reasonably expected them to produce a court poet capable of rolling out a formally perfect stanza with the greatest of ease rather than hobbling lines which can leave one in doubt as to whether they are in metre at all.
- 4 K.M. Nielsen, *DanmarkaR bot*, *ÅrbOldk.* 1943, pp. 160 ff.; cf. Lis Jacobsen, *ÅrbOldk.* 1945, pp. 104 ff., and again K.M. Nielsen, *Kan DanmarkaR bot betyde Danmarks bødning?*, *ÅrbOldk.* 1946, pp. 267 ff., cf. *Mediaeval Scandinavia* 1974, pp. 156 ff. – In *Mediaeval Scandinavia* 1974, pp. 180 f., Niels Åge Nielsen has voiced some thoughts on the possible connection of *bót* with sacral, supernatural power attributed to the king (and his queen). Whether there is anything in this, time will tell. As things stand, the premises seem rather lightweight in themselves and depend on a theory not much in fashion at the moment.

- 5 Harald Blåtands runesten i Jelling. Epigrafi, kronologi og historie, Kuml 1971, pp. 7 ff.; an enlarged English version of this paper is in *Mediaeval Scandinavia* 1974, pp. 183 ff. E. Johansen and A. Liestøl, *Jellingsteinen. Steinhogger og runerister*, Kuml 1977, pp. 65 ff. E. Moltke, *Kong Haralds mishandlede Jellingsten*, Kuml 1979, pp. 205 ff.
- 6 E. Moltke, *Jon Skonvig og de andre runetegnere*, II (*Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana. Supplementum*, II, 1958), pp. 69 ff.
- 7 Aksel E. Christensen, *Vikingetidens Danmark*, p. 227.
- 8 The objects from the grave-chamber in the north mound are described by Else Roesdahl in *Mediaeval Scandinavia* 1974, pp. 208 ff. The conclusion is that the chamber was prepared for two people, a woman and a man, Thyre and Gorm. Else Roesdahl will not acknowledge that the wooden manikin with the triquetra is necessarily a Christian contribution to the grave-goods. The Jelling cup is rightly assessed as a drinking vessel, not a grave-chalice (cf. the Tømmerup cup).
- 9 See P.V. Glob's illustrated account in *Skalk* 1969.
- 10 The most recent contribution on this subject is Olaf Olsen's entertaining article in *Mediaeval Scandinavia* 1974, pp. 226 ff.
- 11 A different, but unsatisfactory, account will be found in K.M. Nielsen's article "Kuml" in *Kuml* 1953, pp. 7 ff., repeated without any new arguments of note in *Mediaeval Scandinavia* 1974, pp. 169 ff. — Cf. also the critique by Niels Åge Nielsen, *Mediaeval Scandinavia* 1974, pp. 181 f.
- 12 On the triquetra and the development of its significance in the North see E. Moltke in *Mediaeval Scandinavia* 1974, pp. 203 ff., and the article "Triquetra" in *Kulturhistorisk Leksikon for nordisk middelalder*.
- 13 S.B.F. Jansson, *RunSverige*, p. 86, says "One is naturally tempted to guess it was the battle at 'Svolder' in AD 1000. But we do not know."

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HEATHEN AND CHRISTIAN

Paganism. Hostile and protective formulas

Like the futhark on bracteate amulets and from the Kylver burial on Gotland, the runic alphabet on the rank heathen stone at Gørlev must be regarded as a charm intended to protect the stone and grave, while the "magic" sequence *þmkiii-ssstttiiilll* may be understood as a curse on anyone who disturbs the dead and his monument.

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Such plain-spoken curses as “May he become a ‘ræte’ is ailti stain þānsi – who damages (?) this stone” or “May he become a troll-man who breaks it” (cf. also Stentoften-Björketorp) firmly stamp the inscriptions as heathen. Consecration of runes and monument to Thor does the same – whether such inscriptions date from before or after King Harald’s “conversion” of the Danes to Christianity.

But loyalty to the old faith could also find pictorial expression: rune stones with a mask carved on them – most frightening on the great Århus stone 3 – or representations of Viking ships could also demonstrate where the carver’s patrons stood in matters of religion.

The situation is clearer still when we find illustrations of heathen myths: the giantess Hyrrokin riding her wolf with a snake for reins (Hunnestad), reminders of Ragnarök in the shape of a ship and gaping wolf’s heads (Tullstorp). Close to the heart of heathendom must be the stones that refer to the living leader of cult worship, the *gode* of the Glavendrup inscription (cf. Snoldelev, Helnæs and Flemløse 1).

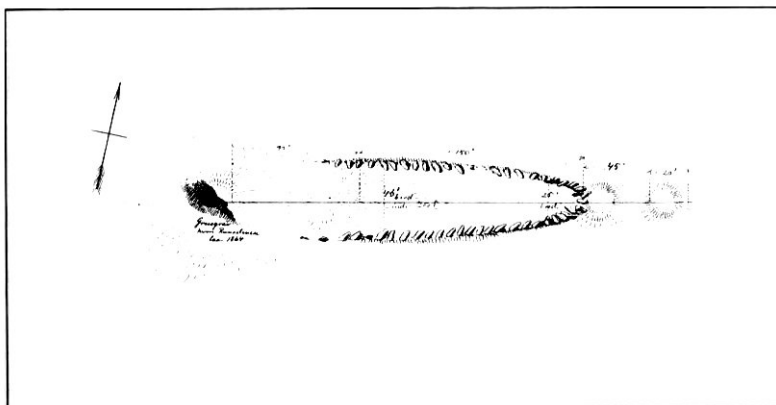
Let us begin with *Glavendrup*, our longest inscription on stone – appropriately because it was set up by the same woman and carved by the same rune-master as the *Tryggevælde* stone, whose language and reference to the *skæiþ* or warship – i.e. the stones placed to make the outline of a ship – mark it as the product not merely of an un-Christian but of a pre-Christian milieu. For everything suggests that these two stones are considerably older than Harald’s Jelling stone, though on the other hand they are typologically younger than the Gørlev stone, the latest of the transition period monuments. A third stone to be associated with them is the one at *Rønninge*, set up by Sote, the rune-master of Glavendrup and Tryggevælde, in memory of his brother.

The Ragnhild who commissioned these stones, two of the biggest in Denmark, must have belonged to a mighty family: first married to the eloquent Gunulv on Sjælland and then to a *gode* on Fyn – the only man commemorated in runes to be described as a *thegn* “worthy of honour” – clearly a man revered in his society. There is no external evidence to show which of the two stones is the older, but since Ragnhild de-



Glavendrup monument, Fyn. The illustration below is of Magnus-Petersen's drawing of 1864, the one above is borrowed from E. Albrecht-sen's restoration report of 1958 (Fynske Minder 1958). — The rune stone — an ancient sacred rock with many saucer-shaped depressions — is c. 190 cm tall. Originally it doubtless stood on a little natural mound at the west end of the great ship setting (some 60 m long), whose east end is associated with a low Bronze Age mound. Alle, the dead magnate, *gode* and *thegn* “worthy of honour”, was not buried in or near the ship setting nor under the rune stone. Perhaps he died far from home?

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scribes herself on the Tryggevælde stone as Ulv's sister, it is natural to assume that Sjælland was where she belonged. On the Glavendrup stone she needs no family introduction – the grand lady has the stone set up in her own unqualified name.

*229 *The Tryggevælde stone, Sjælland:*

Face A: raknhiltr | sustir | ulfs | sati | stain | þnnsi | auk | karþi
| hauk | þansiauft | aukskaip | þaisi | kunulf | uarsin |

klāmulanman | (s)un | nairbis | fair | uarþa | nufutir | þaibatri

Face B: sauarpi | at (i) rita | isailtistainþansi

Face C: ipahipantraki

Ragnhild, Ulv's sister, placed this stone and made this mound in memory – and this ship setting (skaip) – of Gunuly, her husband, a 'clamorous man', son of Nærve. Few will now be born better than him. May he become a "ræte" who damages (or destroys?) this stone or drags it from here.

*225 *227 *The Glavendrup stone, Fyn:*

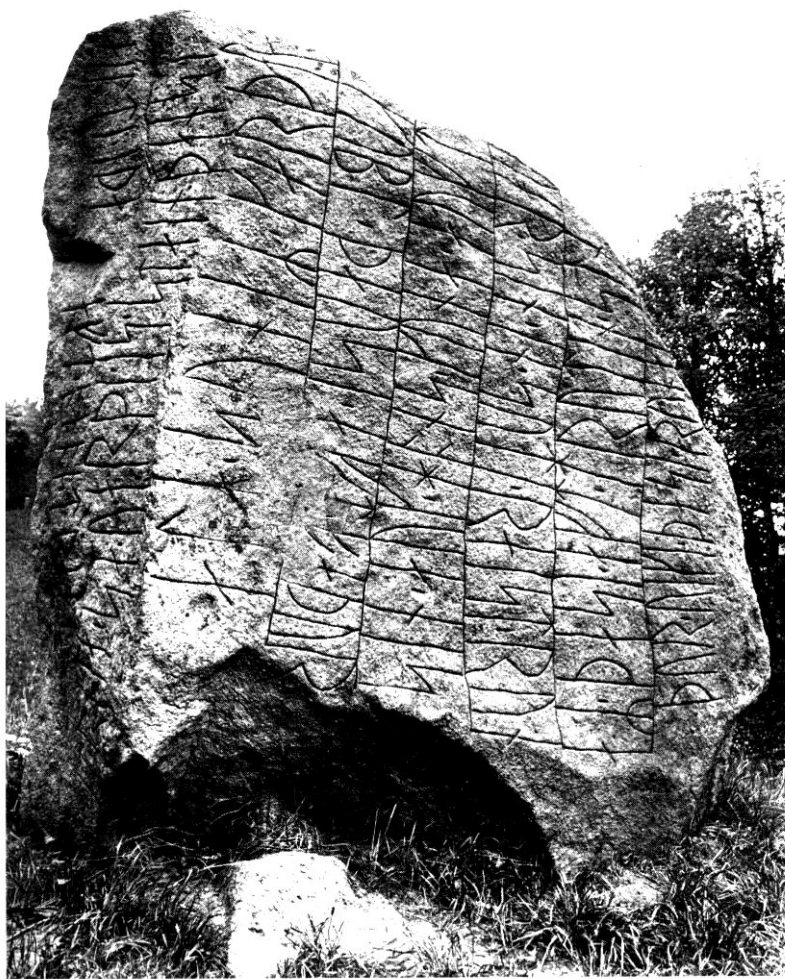
Face A: raknhiltr | sa | ti | stainþansi | auft | ala | sauluakuþa |
uial(i)þshaiþuiarþanþia | kn

Face B: ala | sunir | karþu | kubl | þausi | aft | faþur | sin |
auk | hāns | kuna | auft | uar | sin | in | suti | raist | run | ar |
þasi | aft | trutin | sin | þur | uiki | þasi | runar

Face C: at | rita | sa | uarpi | is | stainþansi | ailti | ipa | aft |
aṇan | traki

Ragnhild placed this stone in memory of Alle, *gode* of the Sølver, honour-worthy *thegn* of the *uia*-host. Alle's sons made this monument in memory of their father and his wife in memory of her husband, and Sote carved these runes in memory of his lord. Thor hallow these runes. May he become a "ræte" who damages this stone or drags it (away to stand) in memory of another.

Sote was not a perfectionist, at least not on the Tryggevælde stone where he makes a spelling mistake (þnnsi for þansi) and manages to write the preposition auft (in memory of) before auk skaip þaisi instead of after it. He seems more practised on the Glavendrup stone, but both messages are systematically constructed, each ending with a curse on any would-be



Glavendrup stone, Fyn. 188 × 142 cm. Retouched photograph. — The stone — which has more runes and words on it than any other Danish rune stone — was set up by the great lady Ragnhild who was also responsible for the creation of the Tryggevælde monument (see the caption to the plate). — There are several obscurities in the inscription; but comparison with Helnæs-Flemløse (*nura kupa*) must show that *ala saulua kupa* cannot mean Alle the pale, *gode*, but must be translated: Alle, *gode* (priest) of the Solver. Neither do we understand *uial(i)ps*, presumably the name of a particular war-band or warrior host (*lip*).

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vandal. We do not exactly know what either the noun “ræte” (riti) or the verb ailti means: though the intention is clear, the precise content escapes us [1].

In the Glavendrup inscription the curse comes after a “Thor hallow” formula, which seems natural enough on this pagan monument commemorating a priest of the *æsir* faith. But both one and two generations after King Harald announced on his Jelling stone that he had made the Danes Christian, we find citizens of his realm still sticking to their old beliefs and in-
 230 voking Thor (Sønder Kirkeby, Virring). On the stone we are to look at next the Thor formula is replaced by a picture of a hammer.

Somewhere in the present county of Ribe in North Jutland there once lived a Thor-devotee called Ravnunge-Tue. His name is found on three rune stones, in Læborg and Bække, which are only 5–6 km apart, and at Horne (now only a fragment), some 50 km northwest of Bække.

*247 The two lines of runes on the *Læborg stone*, North Jutland, each end with a carving of a Thor’s hammer:

rhafnukatufi : hiau : runar : þasiaft || þurui : trutnik : sina
 Tue, descendant of Ravn, hewed these runes in memory of Thorvi (Thyre), his lady (i.e. the wife of his master) [2].

*247 *Bække stone 1*, North Jutland:

rafnuka : tufi : auk : futin : | auk : knubli : þair : þrir : kaþu
 : | : þuruiar : hauk :

Tue, descendant of Ravn, and Funden and Gnyple, those three made Thorvi’s (Thyre’s) mound.

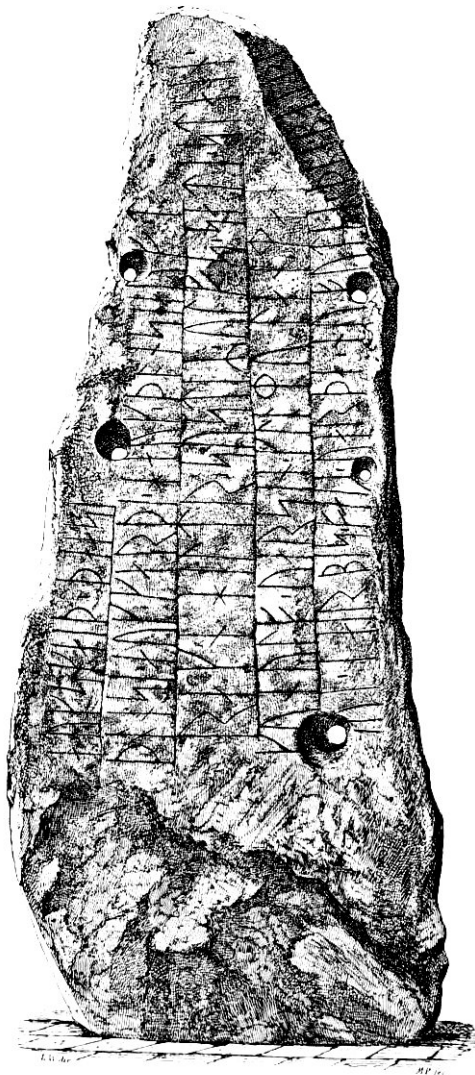
Horne stone, North Jutland:

... fnukatufikaþihaukþ?? ...

Tue, (Ravn’s) descendant, made this mound [after ...] (or Th ... ’s mound – but not Thorvi’s mound as at Bække, because the rune following þ cannot possibly be u).

How old are these stones? Older or younger than Harald’s Christian stone at Jelling? The wrongly placed h in rhafnuka

Tryggevælde stone, Sjælland. 325 cm. Face A. — Ragnhild, Ulv's sister, set up the stone and made mound and ship setting (skaip) in memory of her husband, Gunulv, son of Nærve. The same high-born lady was later married to Alle, a distinguished *gode* on Fyn, and in his memory she erected the Glavendrup stone. Both of these impressive stones, with inscriptions cut by a man called Sote, end their messages with a curse against would-be disturbers of the monuments — and on the Glavendrup stone Sote further invokes Thor to “hallow these runes” — are decidedly heathen. The two inscriptions are younger than Gørlev-Nørre Næra but older than Gorm's Jelling stone. They are usually dated c. 900 and that is probably not far wrong. Illustration from Wimmer, DRM.



shows that the writer still had some perception of the original initial aspirate (*hrafn*) — cf. Åver's spelling *rhuulfr* (= *Hrólfr*) on the Helnæs stone. That would take it back to Gorm the Old's time and even before. The triple-dot division marks could point in the same direction. But inclining the other way is the curved ribbon for the runes on the Horne stone, an arrangement common in Jutland and Skåne but only on stones

which are to be dated not earlier than the reign of Sven Fork-beard (they have forms like *iftir*, *eftir*, dotted runes and cross-shaped division marks) – most of them from c. AD 1000, a few a generation older. It becomes therefore well nigh impos-
 228 sible to make Ravnunge-Tue's stones contemporary with Gorm's stone at Jelling (or to identify the lady, Thorvi – Thyre – with King Gorm's consort) – at best they might be of an age with Harald's stone. The word “drotning” on the Læborg stone is certainly not to be taken in its later generalised sense of queen, wife of the monarch, but here – as always in runic inscriptions – as a term for the mistress of the household, the lady of the manor [2] – and she and her lord were good pa-gans, as the Thor's hammers show (cf. below on Sønder Kirke-by).

Besides Glavendrup, two more inscriptions invoke Thor, one in Jutland and one on Falster:

*233 *Virring stone*, North Jutland:

! ki?mutr | | ...n | k(a)rþi | | m(i)n(i) | [þa](u) | af(t) [!]|
 sasur | star | r(i)sþi | stin | aft | tuþan | || þur | uiki | þisi |
 kuml |

Germund (?) [NN's so]n (?) made these memorials after Sas-ser. Stær set up the stone in memory of the dead man. Thor hallow this monument!

*233 *Sønder Kirkeby stone*, Falster, conceals its invocation of Thor in long “same-stave” runes, which are easily mistaken for the waves over which the ship of the dead is sailing.

[?]?sur : sati : stin : | þinsi : haft : ask(u) ... | brupur : sin : ian
 : ... uarþ : tuþr : a : ku... (same-stave runes): þur : uik[i : r]ju-
 nar [:] ...

Sasser (?) placed this stone in memory of Asgote (?), his brother, and he met death on Gotland (?). – Thor hallow [these] runes!

Whatever the deeper meaning of *vígja*, to hallow, consecrate, (it was later replaced by *signa*, bless) it is plain that the “Thor hallow” formula was intended as a protection. We perhaps

glimpse something of the background of ideas in Snorri Sturluson's thirteenth-century account of the cremation of the god, Baldr (to be mentioned again in connection with Hunnestad below). When the bodies of Baldr and Nanna, his wife, were laid in his ship, Ringhorn, and the fire was lit, Snorri says: Then Thor stood by and hallowed (*vígði*) the pyre with his hammer [3]. 250ff.

The impression we get from these two stones is that they belong somewhere between the great Jelling stone and the year 1000. Is this late date the reason why the carver disguises his heathen invocation by using "same-stave" runes – just as the carver of the late Korpbron stone in Sweden does in rendering his *sipi þur* ("Thor give supernatural protection!" (?) [4])?

The false initial h in the preposition *haft* (after, in memory of) might indicate that the writer was from Skåne, where several inscriptions show they dropped their aitches and spoke Scandinavian Cockney. The once handsome Viking ship (it was rather spoilt when some disrespectful mason reshaped the stone for use as an ashlar in the local church) also suggests Skåne (cf. Tullstorp and Bösarps). Two inscriptions on Lolland (Sædinge and Tirsted) also have links with the Swedish mainland: with Sønder Kirkeby they are milestones on the road some emigrating Swedes took on their way to Hedeby. The ship does not mean "Here lies a Viking", but is a heathen symbol which will be discussed at greater length in connection with the Tullstorp stone. 250 256
300 299
230

A stylised Thor's hammer – if it is not a version of a tau cross – is seen on *Spentrup stone 2*, which has cross-shaped division marks and must be post-Jelling. The long-shafted hammer on the late *Hanning stone*, which V . . . Tueson set up in memory of his mother, Gyde, is unusual. The inscription has dotted runes and preposition *eftir* (with r, not ʀ), so it most probably belongs to the following period. It seems likely therefore that the hammer is better interpreted as a smithy tool than as Thor's (short-handled) Mjölnir. Was the carver or the man who commissioned the stone a blacksmith? 272
402

The Thor formula is not the only expression of heathendom on our rune stones. Curses may occur on medieval (Christian) gravestones and even on church furnishings, but the "ræte"

formulas and their kind may be confidently counted rank pagan examples. Apart from the Tryggevælde and Glavendrup stones, one inscription in Skåne and two in Jutland belong to this group.

*233 *Glemminge stone, Skåne:*

× suini : sati : stin : þasi : iftir : tusta : hin : skarba : fauþur |
sin : harþa : kuþan : buta : uirþi : at : rata : huas : ub | briuti
Svenne placed this stone in memory of Toste the sharp (the thin?), his father, a very noble householder. May he become a “ræte” who breaks it!

*233 *Sønder Vinge stone 2, North Jutland:*

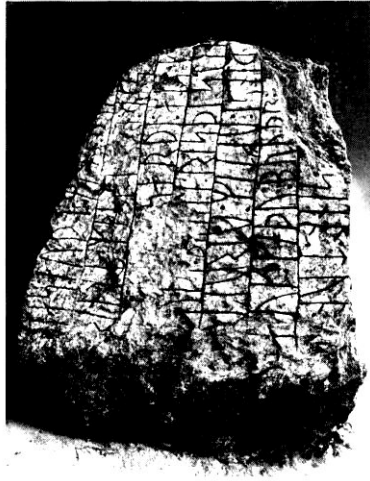
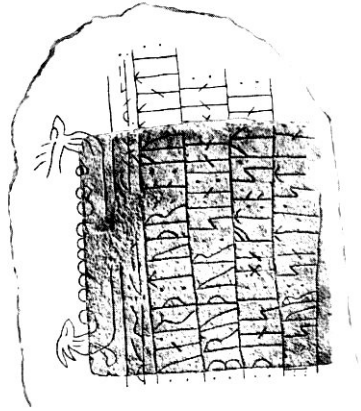
?u(þi) : b(i)?(l)i : risþi : stin | : þensi : uftir : uruku | auk :
kaþu : bruþr : | siṇa : tuṇ : ... : sarþi : auk | siþ : r[a](t)i : saṛ :
maṇr : | ias : auþi : mini : þui

230 Top left: Virring stone, North Jutland. 155 cm. Retouched photograph. — Germund announces that he has made these memorials (mini þau) in memory of Sasser. The word *minni* is thus used in the plural, like *kumbl* on rune stones made after c. 900, and presumably refers to mound and stone setting. But the man who actually set up the stone was Star or Stær. His and Germund’s “memorials” are then covered by a comprehensive term: Thor hallow this monument (þisi kuml — plural).

230 Top right: Sønder Kirkeby stone, Falster. 80 × 70 cm. Retouched photograph and reconstruction. The heads on prow and stern supplied from Bösarp. — This, the only rune stone on Falster (though probably made by a man from Skåne), was once a handsome sight. Now it has been reshaped as a church ashlar and it was no cause of concern to the twelfth-century mason that he was destroying a Viking ship that was perhaps as

*249 noble a piece as the one on the Tullstorp stone. He had no suspicion either that he was also maiming a “Thor hallow” formula. The picture of the ship and the spelling haft with false initial h for preposition aft point to Skåne.

Bottom left: Glemminge stone, Skåne. 112 cm. Retouched photograph. — Svenne placed this stone in memory of his father, Toste the Sharp (the thin? or the brusque?), a very noble householder. He shall become a “ræte” who breaks it. A typical post-Jelling stone (iftir not aft), contour-line arrangement but each line of runes in its own frame so that the beloved double contour of the Jelling period is retained. The form fauþur, i.e. *fēþur*, with “younger” u-mutation has been counted a par-



tical Scanian (and Bornholm) feature, but it occurs also on Gørlev stone 2, Sjælland. 158

Bottom right: Sønder Vinge stone 2, North Jutland. 180 cm. Retouched photograph. — Hardest of all Danish rune stones to read, a lunar landscape of craters and mountains. Floodlight and pocket torch don't help at all — God's good sun would be best — but now the stone is kept in the church porch. Some bits are so far neither deciphered nor understood, but the main message is clear: a man set up the stone in memory of his two brothers, Uroke and Kade. Possibly they met a treacherous death. The conclusion is a curse on anyone who "destroys this memorial" (cf. Skern stone 2).

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NN set up this stone in memory of Urøke and Kade, his two brothers ... wounded (?) and worked witchcraft. A “ræte” that man who destroys this memorial! Or, as proposed by Niels Åge Nielsen [5]:

wærþi særþi
ok seþr(e)tti,
saR mannr, æs øþi minni þwi

May he be [reckoned] a pervert and a trollman, the man who destroys this memorial.

If we substitute an adjective or substantive for *wærþi* and instead of “be [reckoned]” understand “become” (cf. note 1) and emend the translation “pervert” to “wizard – *ræte*” – the whole imprecation falls better into line with the Swedish Saleby, which says “He shall become a *ræte* and an *arg* woman (*arg* in this context means one dealing in black magic, the woman is a witch) who breaks it!” And with a (pejorative) adjective or substantive before *sarþi*, the curse gets a form in
 236 harmony with what is found on the Skern stone. But we should stop short here and emphatically remind ourselves that all this is guesswork: for the *wærþi* that Niels Åge Nielsen thinks he can read before *sarþi* is the result of pure auto-suggestion – not that it is a rarity for a reader of runes to find what he thinks ought to be there. Neither an experienced nor an amateur reader can see anything here (cf. note 1): Wimmer read, or permitted himself to believe he could read, an s. Sønder Vinge is the hardest of all stones to decipher. But from the point of view of interpretation it has a certain extra interest: for it was this inscription as read by Wimmer which inspired the historian Erik Arup to see Danish Vikings as peaceful tillers of the soil. That drove Lis Jacobsen to pick up her pen – and that in turn gave the impetus which led to our joint work on Denmark's Runeindskrifter. Wimmer read the end of the inscription like this:

(s)[al : sa]s arþi : auk : | sap̃i : u[k]R : saR : mun : | akup̃i :



Skern stone 2, North Jutland. 193 cm. Retouched photograph. — A lady called Sasgerd put up the stone in memory of Odinkar (presumably her husband) who is described as the “dear”, i.e. prominent, and the lord-loyal. He must have been a great lord whose retainer could be honoured by such a memorial (was he perhaps the king himself — Sven Forkbeard in that case?). The concluding curse says: A warlock that man who this monument breaks — the monument must have included both mound and stone setting.

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Before giving his translation, the reader should be told that Wimmer regarded what stands in parenthesis as uncertain and what stands in square brackets as illegible and therefore merely conjectural. His result is the following verse:

*Sæll sás arpi
 auk sápi ungr:
 sár mun ágópi.*

That is: Happy he who ploughed and sowed young. That will give crops. — Was it surprising that Arup fell for it? Apart from other misreadings — which show how difficult the inscription really is, for Wimmer was a very capable rune-reader — the crucial point is the separation of the *s* from *sarpi* to give the word *arpi* “ploughed” (cf. the word *ard* — a kind of plough). But Wimmer belonged to a generation which believed that the *landmannr* of the rune stones meant the same as modern Danish *landmand* — farmer, agriculturist.

*235 *Skern stone 2, North Jutland:*

saskiripr : rispi : stin : finulfs : tutir : at : upinkaur : usbiarnar :
 sun : þa(n) : tura : uk : hin : turutin : fasta || siþi : sa : manr :
 is | : þusi : kubl : ub : biruti

Sasgerd, Finulv's daughter, set up the stone in memory of Odinkar, Osbjørn's son (or perhaps Husbjørn's?), the eminent and the lord-loyal. A warlock [6] that man who this monument breaks!

If we try to fix the date of these three stones, the result is the same as for Virring and Sønder Kirkeby. Glemminge has sati stin þasi (not raispi stain þansi), the extended preposition form iftir (not aft), but the old *s*-form in huas (not huar). Sønder Vinge has a dotted rune in þensi, the long preposition form uftir, stin (not stain), but also the *s*-form in ias (not iar). Skern has no dotted runes but rispi, stin, uk (not auk) and preposition at (not aft or aftir). Taken individually, such forms have no significance (Gørlev has rispi stin, we remember), but collectively they indicate a date considerably later than Harald's



Gørlev stone 2, Sjælland. “Secret” writing. Photograph of a papier maché impression. — Is it real and honest secret writing or is it rubbish? The line starts with three p-runes, then three upside-down u-runes, then a figure which is not a rune (unless it is a double m), next come three n-runes and finally a three-pronged fork which is no sort of rune either. The two non-runic shapes make one suspicious of the idea of “secret” runes.

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Gørlev stone 2, Sjælland. 160 cm. Retouched photograph. — This stone, set up in memory of Halvdan by a son, Thor-got, or daughter, Thor-gund, certainly deserves to be put under the heading of Bungling Amateurs. So many curiosities in it seem only explicable on grounds of the carver’s lack of ability in the art of runes. Is the meaningless “spell” sequence an imitation of Gørlev 1, carved at least a century earlier? On the u-mutation in faupur see the caption to the Glemminge stone.



*233

Jelling stone, later indeed than Sven Forkbeard’s Haddeby stone. A date c. 1000, a bit before or a bit after, is doubtless reasonable. And it is not really remarkable that pagan beliefs still flourished among the upper classes a generation and more after Harald “made the Danes Christian”. In the picture stones

- 219 Valleberga stone, Skåne. 157 cm. Retouched photograph. — The stone has a special interest considered in relation to the Fuglie and Jelling monuments. The inscription reads: *suen : auk : þurgutr (þorgundr or þorgotr) : kiauṛpu : kuml : þisi | eftir : mana | auk · suina || kup : hialbi : siaul : þera : uel : ian : þer : likia : i : luntunum* — Sven and Thorgund (or Thorgot) made this monument in memory of Manne and Svenne. God help their souls well. And they lie in London. — Although the dead men are buried in London and although the stone with its prayer and its cross (but note the inner swastika) is decidedly Christian, they nevertheless had a monument (*kuml* — mound and stone setting?) built for them in their native land. The similarly Christian Fuglie stone was set up on a mound — and the Christian king, Harald Blacktooth, piled up an empty memorial mound for his parents to match the mound in which they were actually buried. So it was the common custom. There was nothing un-Christian about it.



we have other persuasive examples of prolonged and stubborn adherence to the ancestral faith.

But we are not yet finished with our runic paganism:

Gørlev stone 2, Sjælland:

*237

þurkutru × sati | stin | þinsi | aftir halftan | fauþur | sin
Thorgot (a man) or Thorgund (a woman) placed this stone in
memory of Halvdan, his (or her) father.

The inscription begins with the middle line, starting at the bottom and goes on in the left-hand line, reading from the top (bustrophedon). The third line, the one on the right, has a remarkable sequence: reading from the bottom we see three þ-runes, three u-runes upside down, then ƿ (m) with two circles (= mm, or is it a rune at all?), then three n-runes (or are they a-runes upside down?), and finally a symbol like a trident. So the carver gives us a series of signs, some of them repeated, some the right way up, some inverted, and two that do not belong in any alphabet. We cannot take him seriously: we feel we are back among the meaningless bracteate inscriptions, Sven Estridsson's runic coins, and the Cyprianus books with their gibberish and mish-mash of roman letters, runes and empty scrawls. Linguistically, then, this line has no meaning. But, dash it, there is deeper meaning of a kind in the bracteate inscriptions, for instance – and what it was is plain enough: their marks were meant to give the ignorant customer the impression that he had got his hands on a reliable and potent charm. Can it be that the gibberish on Gørlev 2 means that the rune-writer had fooled Thorgot or Thorgund into believing that he was giving them a magic spell on their stone which was fully comparable in potency to the formula on Gørlev 1, carved a century and a half earlier? Is it conceivable that people around AD 1000 were still familiar with that formula? Or is the Gørlev 2 inscription the work of a man for whom the individual runes had no more meaning than they had had for the goldsmiths of the bracteates, or made no more sense to him than roman capital letters did to a stone-mason working in a church later in the middle ages? Such an assumption might explain the peculiar form of the patron's name: þurkutru –;

þurkutr is a perfectly good name, even though the spelling does not clearly show whether it belonged to a man or a woman (cf. the Valleberga stone; on the Asmild stone the name is clearly feminine). The final u is superfluous. Is it perhaps the final r-rune repeated and turned into u?

However that may be, it is certainly of interest to note that the carver wrote faupur (accusative of the word for father). It represents a pronunciation *fɔpʊr*, with u-mutation (*a > ɔ*). Examples of this were previously limited to Skåne (Glemminge – faupur) and Bornholm (Klemensker 2 and 4 – fopur) – now we have an instance from Sjælland.

Christianity. Christian invocation

Outside Bornholm the only Danish Viking Age inscriptions with Christian elements in them are five with Danish runes and two with stut-runes.

Grensten stone, North Jutland:

‖ tuki ‖ smiþr ‖ risþ × ‖ ‖ stin ‖ þisi ‖ aiftir ‖ ‖ ‖ rifla ‖ sun ‖ askis ‖
bianar ‖ ‖ sunar ‖ kuþ ‖ hiab ‖ þara ‖ salu ‖

Toke the smith set up this stone after Revle, son of Esge Bjørn's son. God help their souls.

Toke the smith is probably the man who also carved and raised the Hørning stone. Lund stone 1 names a Thorgisl, also the son of a man called Esge Bjørn's son. Perhaps the two men with the same name and patronymic have something to do with each other, perhaps not.

*241 *Ålum stone 3*, North Jutland:

: uikutr : rispi : stin : þansi : iftir : aski : sun : sin : kuþ : hialbi :
han : silu : uil

Vigot (or Vigund?) set up this stone in memory of Esge, his son. God help his soul well.

*242 *Fuglie stone 1*, Skåne:

· austr · rispi · stin · þansi · | · auftir · aupa · bruþur · | · sin · han
· uarþ · taupr · | · a · kutlati · kuþ · hialbi · ha(n)s · silu

Ålum stone 3, North Jutland. 205 cm. Retouched photograph. — This handsome stone was put up by Vigot in memory of his son — God help his soul well. Was it perhaps the son referred to on Ålum stone 4, which Vigot's wife set up in memory of her "sisterling", a lad dearer to her than her own son — if that is the way it should be read?



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*187

Ønd set up this stone in memory of Øde, his brother. He met death on Gotland. God help his soul.

The stone still stands on its mound, where Jon Skonvig sketched it c. 1627. The mound itself may be from the Bronze Age — it certainly did not contain Øde's mortal remains but was adapted to serve as a cenotaph, like the memorial at *Valleberga* in memory of Manne and Svenne: God help their souls well — and they lie in London [7].

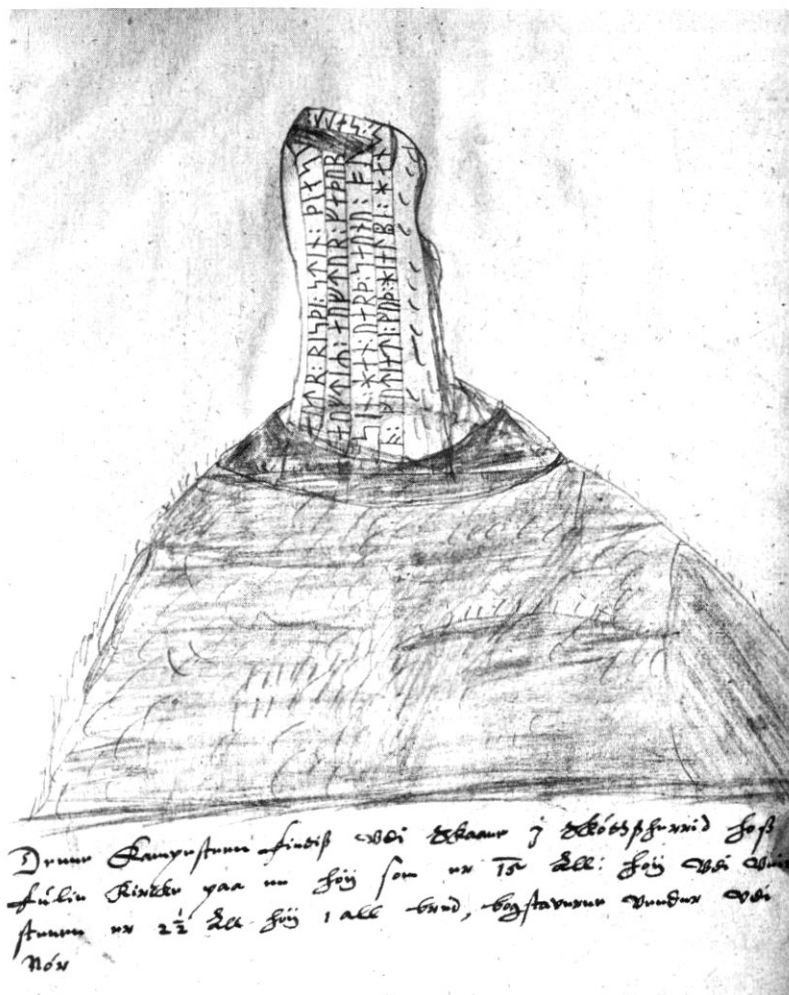
219

Lund stone 2, Skåne:

tuki : let : kirkiu : kirua : auk : ... — Toke had the church built and ...

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The runic and linguistic forms show Lund 2 is our oldest church-builder's monument. Since it is probably to be dated to the first half of the eleventh century, it must refer to one of the cathedral-city of Lund's timber churches, now long



- 240 Fuglie monument, Skåne. — A drawing by Jon Skonvig, the draughtsman employed by Ole Worm, c. 1627 (AM 369 fol., f. 18^r), showing the stone on top of the mound. In his accompanying note Skonvig records the height of the mound as 15 ells, the height of the stone as 2 1/2 ells. The height of the stone above ground is now 105 cm.

since disappeared. It is not known which church it was; the first recorded site of the stone was in a boundary fence in Södergatan.

The two stones with Swedish runes are the fragmentary one in *Slesvig* in memory of a man who rests in Skia (wherever that is) in England, and *Simris stone 2* with its concluding prayer: 265
God help his spirit.

NOTES

- 1 There is a mass of literature on protective and imprecatory formulas on rune stones; special note may be taken of Lis Jacobsen 1935 and Harry Andersen 1953 (*Studier fra Sprog og Oldtidsforskning*), and see Niels Åge Nielsen, *Runestudier* (Odense University Studies in Scandinavian Languages 1, 1968), p. 9. — On Glavendrup, *ibid.*, pp. 10 ff. — NÅN claims (p. 24) that “the protective formula is clearly kept assiduously separate from the rest of the text” — an essential element in his interpretation — but this is not true of the Glemminge stone. It may further be objected that his translation of *wærþi* (*at rata*): may he be reckoned (a *ræte*) seems rather feeble for a curse. NÅN’s new readings (with which my own observations do not agree) need convincing ocular demonstration. 232
- 2 The word *trutnik*, *drotning* (modern *dronning*) is the feminine form of *drot* (cf. *dróttinn*), lord, and refers to the lord’s wife in her capacity as mistress over her subordinates. The latter can use it as a title for the lady, but Gorm cannot refer to Thyre as his *drotning* and he calls her, quite naturally, his wife, just as the “queen” of Harald Blacktooth refers to herself as Harald’s wife on Sønder Vissingstone 1. 203
- 3 The Canterbury formula — like the Ribe formula designed to root out sickness demons — prays Thor to “hallow” (*vígja*) the disease in the sense consigning it to perdition. — In Primitive Norse times the verb appears to occur on the Kragehul spear and the Vimose buckle. 103 92
On the sense of *vígja* cf. P. Foote, *HistTidsskr.* 1979, p. 394.
- 4 See note 6 below.
- 5 *Runestudier* (cf. note 1 above), p. 23.
- 6 The word *sipi* cannot have this sense on the young, but still heathen, Korpbron stone (Sö. I, pp. 106 ff.): Sander set up the stone in memory of Ivar, his kinsman. No one will bear a better son — and then, with “same-stave” runes disguised in a big cross at the top within the inscription field (as on Sønder Kirkeby), *sipi þur*. The word *sipi* here seems most likely to be a verb in the present subjunctive, but *síþa*, work magic, does not seem to make sense — if there was one thing Thor was not at home with, it was black magic and wizardry — 230

7 Cf. Gudveg's rune stick from Herjolfsnæs, Greenland, found in the corner of a coffin in the churchyard there. The inscription is:

+ pæsi : kona : uar : lagb : firi : borþ : i : grøna || laz : hafi : ær :
gubuih : hit

(Poul Nørlund, *De gamle Nordboobygder ved Verdens Ende*, 1934, pp. 48 ff.) The idea behind this stick put into a coffin can, it seems, only have been to give her a vicarious “decent” burial in holy ground – probably to ensure peace for her otherwise restless soul.

Heathen and Christian pictures

The antagonist pictures of the great Jelling stone – the snake-wreathed satanic beast on one side opposed to world-ringed Christ himself on the other – had no successors in the rune-stone art of the Viking Age: such contrasts appear next in churches, especially on doorways and fonts. We have no depiction of Christ until we come to about 1200, on the romanesque sarcophagus-like gravestone from Bregninge on Tåsinge, which is further adorned with the Christian symbols of lily and cross. To find the Jelling stone's triquetra we have to go to another romanesque gravestone (one which says though that it was erected by so-and-so), at Getinge in Halland.

*413

*403

Pars pro toto – a part for the whole – is a very common expression in art history and a recurrent phenomenon in all forms of symbolic representation. When a romanesque sculptor pictured a man slung from a horizontal pole, it was enough to show the theme of “the hunter hunted” and people could complete the whole scene in their imagination, supplying the two animals on their hind legs carrying the pole on their shoulders (as in Vinding church, North Jutland).

Most often pictures on rune stones amount to pars pro toto, scenes and objects abstracted from a whole presentation of Ragnarök, such as must certainly have existed on many a Scandinavian tapestry. We shall understand them best if we start by looking at the *Ledberg stone* in Östergötland, some of whose pictures must certainly be interpreted as illustrations of the Doom of the Gods. The stone was mentioned earlier, but that was because of its magic formula, þmkiissstttiiilll, which it shares with Gørlev 1.

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On face A, which contains the beginning of the inscription, are two helmeted men in knee-length tunics with swords and round shields. Below them a Viking ship, with shields along the side, sails steadily on.

Face B also has two men, this time unarmed. A slender beast

of prey has its gaping jaws fastened on one foot of the upper figure, while below the animal the second man appears to be sinking to the ground. In reality there are only two possible elucidations: either it is the wolf Fenrir in the act of engulfing Odin, or it is Odin's son, silent Vidar, who sets his heel

- 220 Top left: Århus stone 3 (in DaRun nr 4), North Jutland. 160 cm. Face A-B. Retouched photograph. — In Old Danish as conventionally written (it has as little or as much to do with pronunciation as our own written norm has) the inscription reads: *Gunulfr ok Øgotr ok Aslakr ok Roulfr respu sten þænsi æftir Ful, felaga sin, ær warp ... døpr, þa kunungar barþusk* — Gunulv and Øgot and Aslak and Rolf set up this stone in memory of Ful, their partner. He met death ... when kings fought.
- 228 Top right: Læborg stone, North Jutland. Full height ab. 236 cm. Retouched photograph. — Set up by a man who was of the old pagan persuasion (two Thor's hammers correspond to "Thor hallow these runes" at Glavendrup), Ravnunge-Tue, who "hewed the runes in memory of his lady (*drotning*), Thyre". The proper name, the term *trutnik*, and the Bække 1 inscription in which Ravnunge-Tue announces that he and two other men "made Thyre's mound", previously led people to associate this stone with Thyre, King Gorm the Old's wife. But *drotning* means the lord's lady and can be used of her by any subordinate, while Queen Thyre never had a mound of her own: she shared the north mound at Jelling with her husband, Gorm. He started the mound and their son, Harald Blacktooth, finished it.
- 228 Bottom left: Bække stone 1, North Jutland. 164 cm. — Ravnunge-Tue and Funden and Gnyple, those three made Thorvi's mound. Where the mound of this Thorvi or Thyre was located is not known — see the caption to the Læborg stone. Ravnunge-Tue was involved in the erection of yet another rune stone, at Horne, of which we have only a small fragment. It is remarkable, however, as the oldest example we know of so-called "contour arrangement", i.e. the runes are cut in a frame which follows the outline of the stone.

Bottom right: Gårdstånga stone 3, Skåne. 130 cm. Retouched photograph. — Asser placed these stones after Tobbe. The memorial must have consisted of several stones and the sign at the end of the inscription shows that Asser and Tobbe were good pagans. Since it is on its side in relation to the inscription, it must be a stylised Thor's hammer (as also on the Karlevi stone), and not a tau- or St Anthony's cross.



(of which there is admittedly little to be seen in the picture) in the wolf's jaws, splitting them apart to destroy the monster. Whichever explanation is right, we are present at Ragnarök, the end of the world, when gods and giants are locked in mortal combat. The figure sinking to the ground must be a god who has suffered a deadly wound. (After wiping the floor with the Midgard Serpent, Thor retreated nine paces before succumbing to the venom of the great snake – but that does not mean that the figure must be him.) The two well-armed men on face A are perhaps gods, perhaps giants – before the battle. If they were giants, it would be natural to identify the ship as Naglfar, built of dead people's finger-nails and toe-nails; if gods, the only plausible interpretation would seem to be that it is the ship of the dead which will carry the man whom the stone commemorates to his other-world home. The latter idea is all the more likely in view of the frequency with which ships appear on Viking Age rune stones from about AD 1000. At the same time, they then bring tidings of a radical change in Danish concepts of life after death: the dead man no longer has the grave as a dwelling-place, now he departs to a distant realm. Naturally, a Viking sails in a warship, either pictured on a rune stone or represented by a boat-shaped stone setting (a *skaip* as it is called in the Tryggevælde inscription), such as we can still see at Glavendrup and elsewhere. In the nature of things, notions concerning the realm of the dead were vague at the time (some warriors must have firmly believed they went to Valhall, especially if killed in battle, while everybody else went to join the death-goddess, Hel) – and our knowledge of their beliefs are vaguer still. But the ships on rune stones show that the dead man had a long voyage ahead of him (unlike the domesticity enjoined on the men buried at Gørlev and Nørre Nærå); and in general we may conclude that a ship on a rune stone is more likely to be the vessel that carries the dead man into the next world than the Naglfar of Ragnarök.

The finest treatment of Ragnarök motifs on a Danish stone is on one of our grandest monuments, at Tullstorp. The inscription is as simple as that on the Ledberg stone:



Tullstorp stone, Skåne. 200 cm. Retouched photograph. — The inscription on this magnificent stone could not be simpler: Kleppe and Åse set up this monument (kuml) in memory of Ulv; but the pictures — even when seen without their original polychrome splendour — are a joy (however grim the significance for those who could interpret them at the time), carved by a great artist. The ship, the great beast and the gaping wolf-jaws of the rune ribbon are references to Ragnarök, the Doom of the Gods, as may be seen in greater detail on the Swedish Ledberg stone. Concepts and background are out-and-out heathen, in spite of the fact that the stone must be at least a generation younger than Jelling stone 2, on which Harald Blacktooth proclaims that he had made the Danes Christian.

250

*249 *Tullstorp stone, Skåne:*

× klibir × auk × asa × | × risþu × kuml × | þusi × uftir ×
ulf ×

Kleppe (Glippe) and Åse set up this monument in memory of Ulv.

A most splendid warship sails along underneath, equipped with ramming beaks fore and aft and shields along the gunwale. Above it is a really blood-curdling monster (we must remember that the pictures were coloured, black, red, yellow, blue) – is it the wolf Fenrir? But look at the top corners of the inscription ribbon: two wolf's heads with gaping jaws! Is it a repeat of the Odin and/or Vidar motif from the Ledberg stone? The victory of good – of the gods – over evil – the giant wolf? We can only guess.

*251 *The great monument at Hunnestad in Skåne is now sadly dilapidated and partly destroyed, but it was illustrated in what must have been almost its original shape in Ole Worm's work on runes published in 1643. Worm's prospect shows eight stones, two with runes and pictures, three with pictures only, and three with neither runes nor pictures. May we not imagine the monument as comprising a stone circle with the inscribed and pictorial stones at the centre? The strange thing is that the inscriptions do not talk about kumbl, a monument or monumentcomplex, but each merely says that so-and-so "placed this stone".*

Hunnestad stone 1, Skåne:

× asburn × au(k) × tumi × þair × sautu × stain × þansi ×
a(f)[t]ir × rui × auk × | laikfrúþ × sunu × kuna × han[t]ar ×
Esbern and Tomme, they placed this stone in memory of Ro and Legfrød, sons of Gunne Hand.

Hunnestad stone 2, Skåne:

× asburn × sati × stain × þansi × aftir × tuma × sun × kuna
× | hantar ×

Esbern placed this stone in memory of Tomme, son of Gunne Hand.



Hunnestad monument, Skåne. Ole Worm's prospect published in 1643. Only three stones, nr 1, 2 and 4, are now preserved (in Lund). Nr 1 shows a figure with an axe who must be a god or giant. Nr 2 has a big Christian cross on it. Nr 4 shows a giantess, mounted on a wolf. The stones lying flat (now disappeared) show a wolf in front of a mask and a "great beast" (see Tullstorp). A mingling of heathen and Christian! Or is the cross really Christian in this context? Is it not so that in the period about 1000, when Christianity and paganism were coming to grips with each other, people were likely to insure their memorials by adopting the most potent symbols each faith had to offer? Note that the cross in the centre of the outlined Maltese cross is a lightly disguised swastika. Cf. Lund stone 1.

250

255

The picture stones show: (1) a man carrying an axe over his shoulder and wearing a fancy helmet and a knee-length coat (preserved); (2) a "Greek" cross carved in outline with a single-line swastika at the centre (preserved); (3) a human-like figure wearing a knee-length tunic and a pointed cap, riding a four-legged monster with a snake for reins and with another snake in the right hand; above the figure there is one larger and one smaller serpent (preserved); (4) a "great beast" probably corresponding to the Tullstorp monster (lost); (5) a smaller mon-

ster, something like the wolf on the Ledberg stone; it appears to be sticking out its tongue towards a large mask of the kind known on two other Scanian stones, Västra Strö and Bösarp (lost).

To reiterate: pictures on Migration Age and Viking Age rune stones bear no relation to the inscriptions but are invariably drawn from the world of myth. The man with the axe, for example, cannot be a picture of Gunne Hand. He must be a god or a giant. The riding figure is well known from mythology: it is the giantess, Hyrrokin, whom the gods had to call on when they found themselves unable to launch Baldr's funeral ship. In his *Edda* Snorri Sturluson tells us that she came riding a wolf and with a snake for reins; when she shoved the ship off, fire spurted from the rollers and the earth trembled [1].

*275 Yet another Danish picture stone — but with no inscription — takes a subject from Norse mythology: *the Hørdum stone* in North Jutland, found in 1954, has a depiction of Thor's fishing for the World Serpent.

Just as the legend of Sigurd the Dragon-slayer was pictured in wood and stone and paint in Norway, Sweden and Britain both in the Viking Age and the romanesque period that followed [2], so the theme of Thor's fishing was evidently another popular subject for the mason's chisel, judging by extant examples from Denmark, Sweden and England [3].

*264 *The ship* recurs in many variations (cf. the sketches), from
*250 the detailed example on the Tullstorp stone, with shields and
*275 heads at prow and stern, to the merest outline on the *Farsø stone*, found in 1955, erected by Toste and Esbern in memory of their brother, Tue [4]. This vessel, which has no figure-heads, is notable for the indication of bulwarks fore and aft, appropriate on a lighter warship of the Viking Age.

*258 The origins of *the mask* are obscure (I have suggested it was the classical Gorgon's head which found its way to Denmark); but its significance is clear enough: it is a symbol designed to protect and to terrify. In the Viking Age it was a sign as potent as the swastika and triskele had been earlier, or as the cross, triquetra and tetragram were on their way to becoming.

Asger Dragsholt has conducted an amusing experiment which may provide a clue to some of the mysteries of the mask. He

Hunnestad stone 3 (the giantess stone), Skåne. 180 cm. (Cf. Ole Worm's prospect p. 251). Probably the giantess, Hyrrokkin who comes at the appeal of the gods — riding a wolf and with a snake for reins — to shove off the ship in which the dead Baldr lies and which the gods are unable to budge. An eloquent example of the mythological content of Viking Age pictorial carving.



transferred the rune-stone masks to paper, vellum or cardboard, and when they were cut out they folded quite naturally into carnival masks that would conceal the face. This appears to show, or at least makes it seem likely, that such masks were actually worn. When? Presumably in dances and religious processions. In that case, we must assume that whoever wore such a mask was acting the part of a terrifying demon. The biggest and doubtless the most frightening of the masks — we have to visualise it in strong colours — is the one on Århus stone 3, which is among our most magnificent works of Viking Age art. But the one on the *Sjellebro stone* (like the Hørdum stone, without inscription) is almost as big and scary. It was discovered in 1951, lying flat, at Sjellebro (near Randers, North Jutland), where long causeways were being excavated, the oldest of them from about the beginning of our era. Like the other

220

*258 *275

mask stones, the Sjellebro stone itself is to be dated to c. AD 1000 [5].

*272 But to return to the Hunnestad monument, what are we to make of the cross on stone 2 among all these pagan pictures? Is it a sign of the struggle between heathendom and the new faith? Or has the stone been “crossed” at a later date? This last can hardly be the case. It is most likely that the sons used the cross as another magic symbol (i.e. they saw it in a heathen light), because they wanted to safeguard their monument with the powerful resources of both the old religion and the new. We find just the same thing on the famous Mammen axe, with its mask, triquetra and tetragram. It is of no small interest to discover a similar mixture of heathen and Christian motifs on objects whose Christian purpose is in no doubt. On the font at Gettrup (illustrated in M. Mackeprang, *Danmarks middelalderlige Døbefonte*, 1941, fig. 188) are cut six crosses, two hammers very reminiscent of the Thor’s hammers on rune stones, four spear-blades and three shields (?). The font at Lyngby, also in North Jutland, conveys the message more clearly still (Mackeprang, *op. cit.*, fig. 160, and *DaRun*, figs. 399–401): here we see in sequence a cross, a stylised tree, the runes *kup* (= God), a swastika, a tetragram, a lily and a semi-circle above a circle (moon and sun?). We noted the Hunnestad stone with its cross with a swastika insert. The same type is common on Swedish stones and is also known in examples from Bornholm (did Christianity adopt and baptise the swastika?), see e.g. the largely shattered *Klemensker stone 6*, which reads:

...(r)ais(t)[i] : stin : þ[i]nsi : aiftir : suin : brupur : sin : ku...(b)i
: si(l)...auk : kus : mupir : || ...(k)il : rist [:] runar : þisi : auk :
sueni :

NN set up this stone in memory of Sven, his brother. God (help) his soul and God’s mother. . . .kil cut these runes and Svenne.

The stone leaves us in no doubt that the stone was put up in memory of a Christian and presumably by a Christian. The swastika is well hidden in the middle of the “Maltese” cross on the stone. A corresponding cross with a swastika centre is

found on Øster Marie stone 6, where the inscription however is mostly unintelligible.

On Lund stone 1 the mask appears between two facing animals. They have the paws of beasts of prey, manes and big ears pricked, and sword and shield on their flank (at the top of the same side there is an “Århus” mask). This illustration has never been explained (though facing beasts with something between them is one of the oldest motifs in pictorial art); but it must have been meant to provide protection and inspire fear. But the carver was not content with these mighty pagan symbols: he added four crosses on the two rune-inscribed sides, three of them single-line crosses, the fourth a “crossed” cross.

The inscription on *Lund stone 1*, Skåne, reads:

*276

+ þu(r)[kisl | sun | i]sgis | biarnar | sunar | risþi | sti[na | þisi] | (uf)tir | bruþr + || + sinā | baþa | ulaf | uk | utar | lanmitr | kuþa +

Thorgisl, son of Esge Björn’s son, set up these stones in memory of both his brothers, Olav and Ottar, good “land-men”.

The monument had thus consisted of several stones, probably making a circle or ship setting. Note the spelling uk (not auk).

A grave monument at Västra Strö comprises seven stones, two with runes, the others blank. One of the rune stones (nr 2) also has two pictures on it, a mask and a pair of people standing close together — a divine couple — now very badly weathered.

Västra Strö stone 1, Skåne:

*278

fapir : lit : hukua : runar : þisi : uftir : asur : bruþur : sin : is :
nur : uarþ : tuþr : i : uikiku :

Fader had these runes hewn in memory of Asser, his brother, who met death in the north on a viking foray.

Västra Strö stone 2, Skåne:

*277

fapir : lit : hukua : stin : þan(s)i : uftir : biurn : is : skib :
ati : miþ : anum :

Fader had this stone hewn in memory of Björn who owned a ship with him.

Expressions with the verb *lata* – “had made”, “had set up”, “had hewn” – are a later style than the simple “made”, “set up”, and so on, though it is already in evidence on Sønder
 203 Vissing stone 1. The absence of initial h in anum (for hanum, the dative singular of the masculine pronoun) betrays a Scanian dialect that dropped its aitches or was at least confused about them (as in ancient Greek and modern London speech).

We cannot survey all the picture stones but we cannot omit
 *258 to say that in the *Bösarp stone* Skåne possessed an artistic monument that might well have compared with Tullstorp: but all we have left is a couple of pathetic fragments showing the remains of a mask and a Viking ship with shields and a dragon head at the prow.

219 The Holmby stone was mentioned earlier because it is a stone that was subsequently “crossed”. It has a rather poorly executed ship on it, with ramming beaks at prow and stern and dragon heads but no shields or mast. It is a younger stone with dotted runes.

*279 *Holmby stone*, Skåne:

: suin : rispi : stina : þesi : ef(t)ir : þurgir : | faþur : sin :
 Sven set up these stones in memory of Thorger, his father.
 – The memorial consisted of a number of stones.

*282 The animal on *Skårby stone 1* differs from all other “runic beasts”. It is pictured as a panther-like or leopard-like beast of prey, apparently rearing up on its hind legs and at the same time raising its left fore paw to strike. If the stone had been carved in the twelfth or thirteenth century – even perhaps in the second half of the eleventh – i.e. at any time in the romanesque period – one would have had no hesitation in describing it as a lion. Lions make their entry into Denmark along with Christianity, either as a symbol of Satan, who roams about “as a roaring lion . . . seeking whom he may devour”, or as a symbol of Christ, the Lion of Judah. If it is a “Christian” lion on the *Skårby stone* – though used for magical and consequently pagan purposes – it is our first lion on Danish soil (as Skåne was at the time, of course), and we can set its occurrence beside the introduction of the Christian

cross as a symbol on the Hunnestad and Lund stones (and compare the Mammen axe once more). The stone was set up relatively late (*æR* for *æs*) and in memory of a man of means.

Skårby stone 1, Skåne:

*282

× kaulfr × auk × autir × þar × sautu × stain × þans(i) ×
 aftir × tuma × brupur × sin × | i(R)ati × ku | þis × snab |
 a ×

Kaulv and Aute, they placed this stone in memory of Tomme, their brother, who owned Gusnava.

Around 1627 the stone was situated in a meadow between Skårby parish and Gusnava village.

A proper romanesque lion is seen on the notable *Sørup stone* from Fyn (now in the National Museum); the inscription is quite incomprehensible. Anders Bæksted took the view that the stone was “a practical joke from a late age” – perhaps he was right.

*260

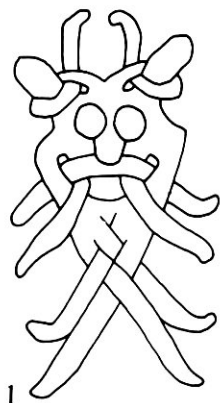
The great Jelling stone 2 has two *snakes* on it. Of one of them only the head is visible, at the top of face A (the inscription side), and we cannot reconstruct with any certainty the way in which the coils of the body were disposed. We can at least say, however, that they do not make the lines which border the rune rows on the two sides – two or four snakes would be needed to provide them. This snake’s head, and that of the second one too, is seen from above, with both eyes

The “mask”. 1. Århus 3, North Jutland. – 2. Sjellebro, North Jutland (uninscribed). – 3. Skern 2, North Jutland (incorporated in the inscription). – 4. Lund 1, Skåne (cf. 6), face D. – 5. †Hunnestad 5, Skåne (uninscribed). – 6. Lund 1, Skåne (cf. 4), face C. – 7. Bösarps, Skåne. – 8. Västra Strö, Skåne. – 9. Sjelle, North Jutland (incorporated). Drawings by Thora Fisker.

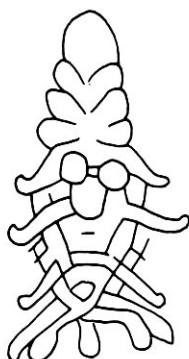
252 *258

Fabulous beasts. 1. Tullstorp, Skåne. – 2. Jelling 2, face B, North Jutland. – 3. Lund 1, face C, Skåne. – 4. †Hunnestad 5. – 5. Hunnestad 3 (the giantess’s “horse”). – 6. London, England. – 7. †Hunnestad 4. – See also the animal heads on the ships (Tullstorp, Holmby and Bösarps in Skåne, and Sønder Kirkeby on Falster). Drawings by Thora Fisker.

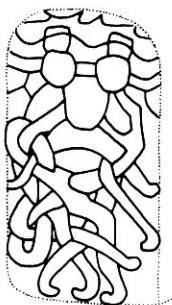
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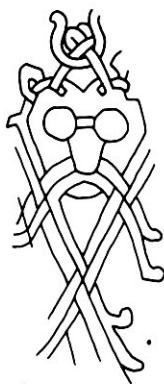
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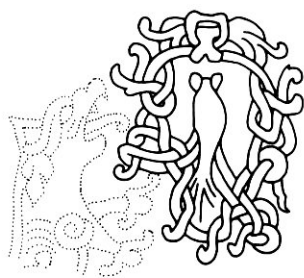
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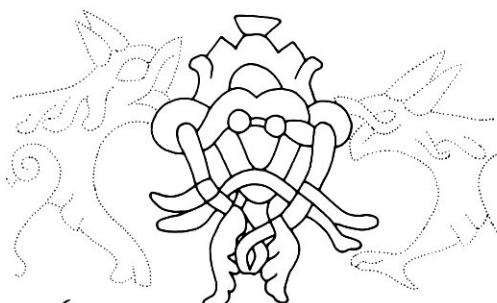
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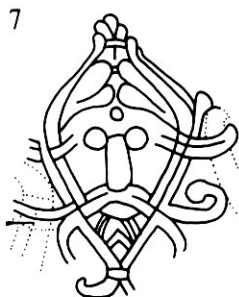
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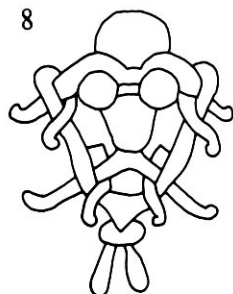
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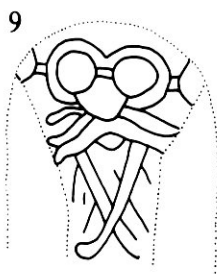
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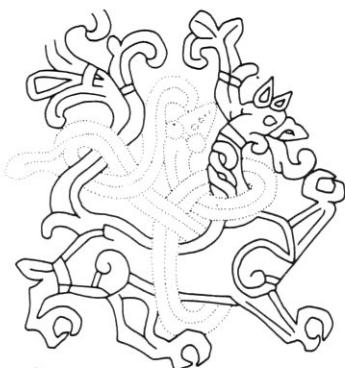
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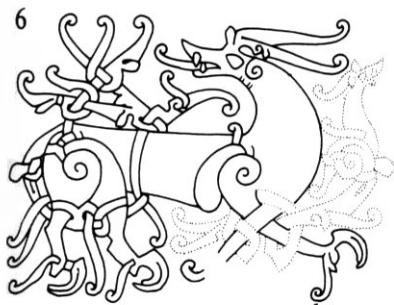
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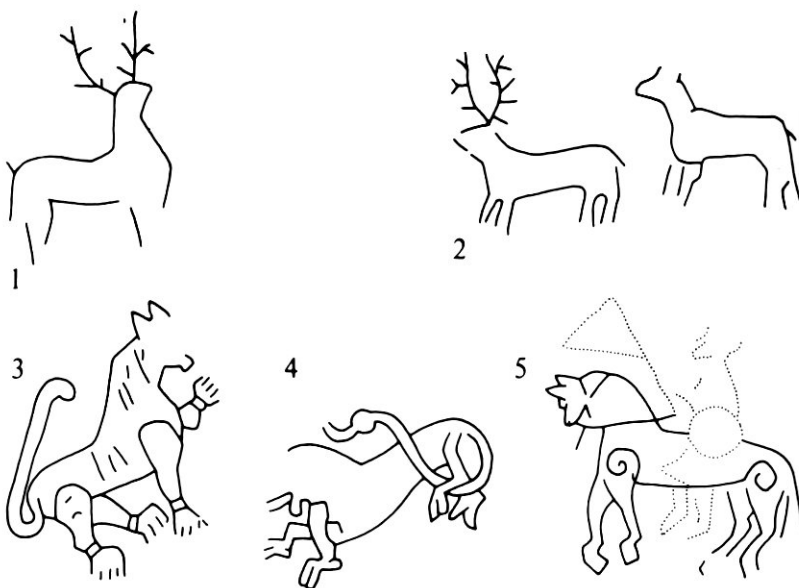
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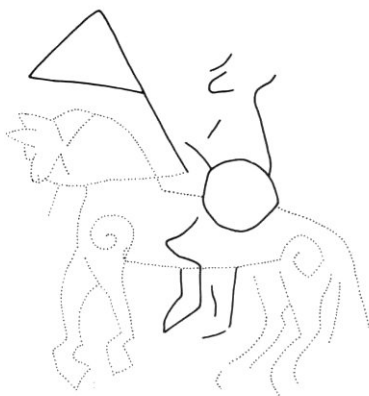
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- 271 Naturalistic animals. 1. Hyby, Skåne. – 2. Glenstrup 2, North Jutland. – 3. Skårby 1, Skåne. – 4. Sørup, Fyn (probably medieval). – 5. Ålum 3, North Jutland. Drawings by Thora Fisker.

- 274 Figures human or divine. No pictorial distinction is made whether the figure is that of a god, a giant or a human being. The characters – even the Jelling Stone’s Christ – are dressed according to contemporary fashion. 1. Sövestad 1, Skåne. – 2. Alum 3, North Jutland. – 3. Church ashlar from Åstrup, North Jutland (medieval). – 4. The Bösarp mask, Skåne. – 5. Hunnestad 1, Skåne. – 6. Århus 3, face B, North Jutland (?). – 7. Västra Strö 2, face C, Skåne. – 8. Hunnestad 3, Skåne. – 9. Jelling 2, face C, North Jutland. Drawings by Thora Fisker.

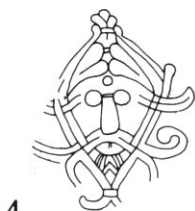
depicted – a type that mostly occurs as a “secondary” snake on later Swedish stones. The second snake is the one that coils itself round the “great beast” on face B of the Jelling stone, the antithesis of the Christ figure on face C and so the representative of evil or the Evil One. The serpent here is not struggling with the animal – it rather clings to it and becomes, as it were, the beast’s own attribute and symbol. It was the serpent which first got us driven out of Paradise.



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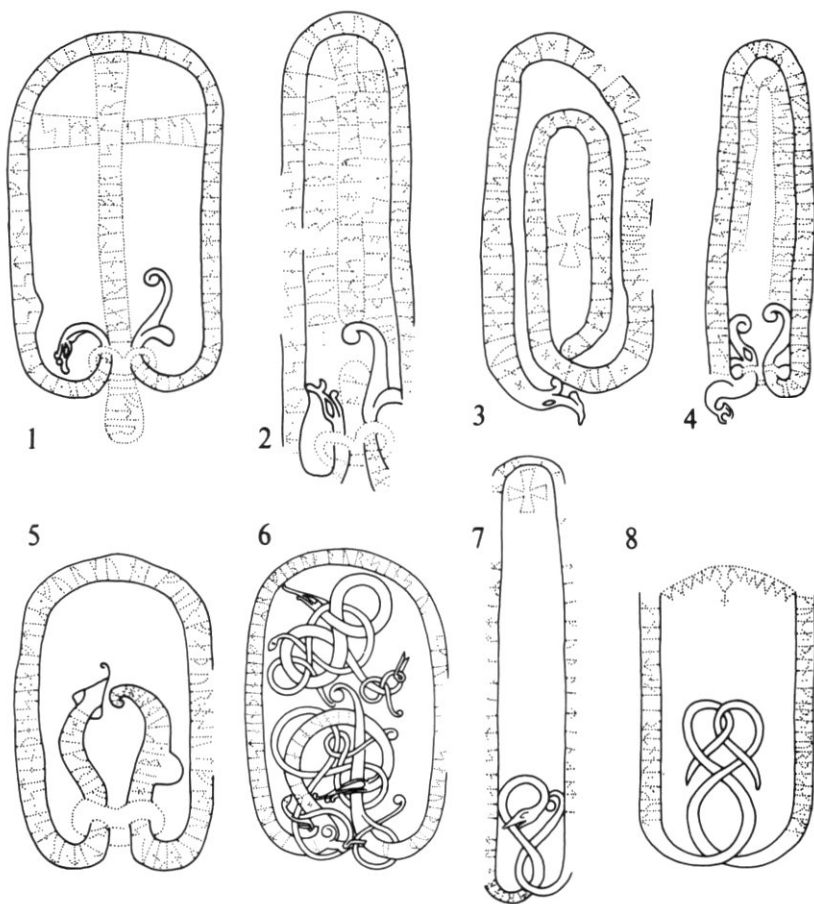
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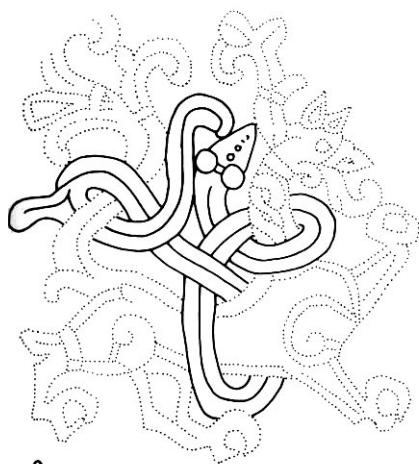
9





- 274 Snakes. 1. Ny Lars 1, Bornholm. — 2. Nyker, Bornholm. — 3. Klemens 4, Bornholm. — 4. Vester Marie 5, Bornholm. — 5. Simris 2, Skåne. — 6. Simris 1, Skåne. — 7. Bodils 5, Bornholm. — 8. †Lösen 2, Blekinge. — 9. Jelling 2, face B, North Jutland (cf. 12). — 10. Hunnestad 3, Skåne. — 11. Sövestad 2, Skåne. — 12. Jelling 2, face A, North Jutland (cf. 9). — 13. Sporup, North Jutland. — 14. Hällestad 2, Skåne. — 15. London, England. — 16. Slesvig, South Jutland. Drawings by Thora Fisker.

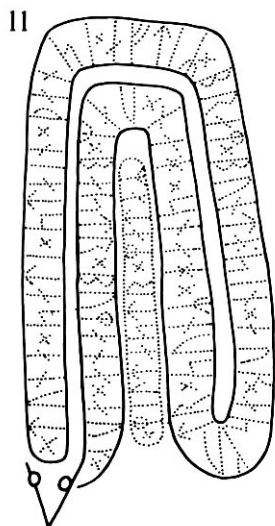
A very odd snake occurs at the top of a stone discovered in 1966. It made a stone step in the walled-up south doorway of the church at Sporup, the inscribed side facing up and scraped and worn by the feet of generations.



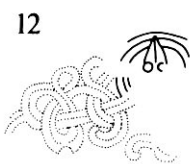
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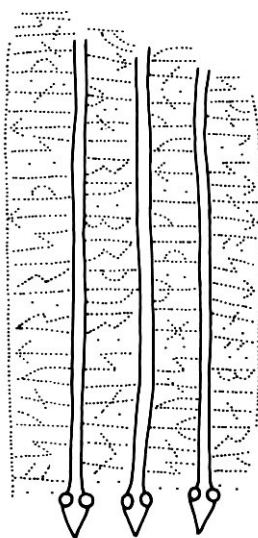
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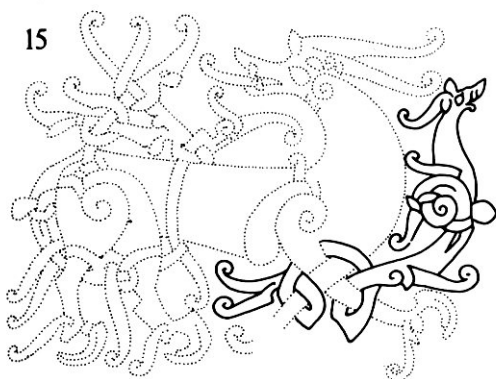
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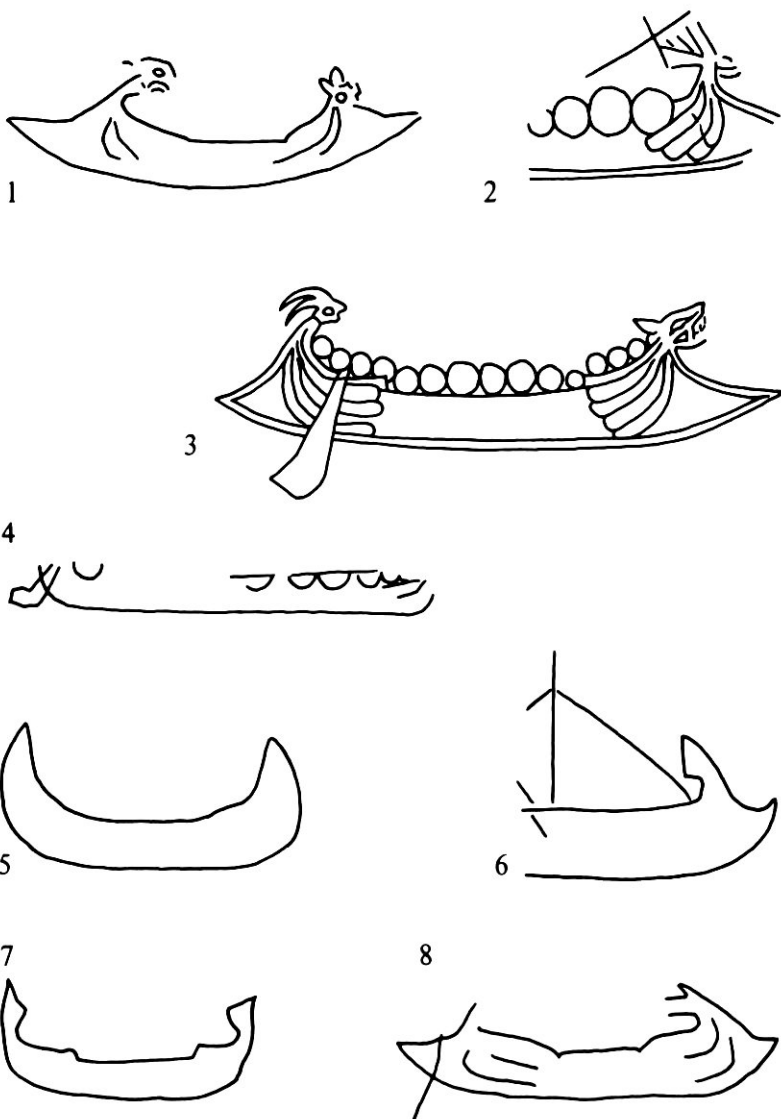
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15



16



252 Ships. 1. Holmby, Skåne. — 2. Börsarp, Skåne. — 3. Tullstorp, Skåne. — 4. Sønder Kirkeby, Falster. — 5. Hørdum, North Jutland (uninscribed). — 6. Spentrup 1, North Jutland. — 7. Farsø, North Jutland. — 8. Hjerminde 1, North Jutland. Drawings by Thora Fisker.

Sporup stone, North Jutland:

*281

þurkil · suipbalki : ris(þ)[i : st]in : þinsi [: afti] | R : tuka :
(f)a[þur : si]n iR : s(k) . . .

Thorkil Svidbalke set up this stone in memory of Toke, his father, who [owned a ship with . . . or something else?].

The rare by-name Svidbalke has not previously been recorded in Denmark; its precise meaning is uncertain, though suggestions have been offered. — The broad sausage-like snake seems unique among rune-stone reptiles — and how its head and tail were connected is uncertain; but both body and head (with a “collar”) suggest amateur work, especially when seen alongside the two very professional Simris stones. The Sporup inscription is of post-Jelling type (iR, þinsi, etc.)

On the subject of “heathen” pictures, it only remains to note that some rune ribbons have border lines furnished with snakes’ heads, see e.g. Hällestad. Purely Swedish snake ornament is found on the two Simris stones in Skåne and the Slesvig stone; numerous Bornholm rune stones similarly decorated provide extra evidence of the strong Swedish influence on that island.

*291

243

Simris stone 1, Skåne:

*281

biarngair × lit [·] raisa · stain · þina · eftiR · rafn · broþur ·
sin · su(i)n · kun(u)..s · asuiþiuþu

Bjarnger had this stone set up in memory of Ravn, his brother, “svend” of Gunu(lv) in Sweden.

280

Simris stone 2, Skåne:

*281

× sigrif | r : let · resa · sten : þensa : aiftiR · furkun : if.r ·
fabur : asulfs : triks : knus | · hilbi : kuþ : an : hans

Sigrev had this stone set up in memory of Forkun E..., father of Asulv, Knud’s “drengr”. God help his spirit.

While Simris 1 (whose decoration points to Uppland) with its o-rune and preposition a (not a) most probably belongs to about 1050 or later, Simris 2 (whose decoration shows influence from Södermanland and Östergötland) with its preserved nasalised a in Asulv and an (and “soul”) — if in the latter word

it does not denote å (cf. the Norwegian Evje stone) – represents
an older stage of the language – but it may be from the same
265 time as Simris 1 for all that. Dating is an uncertain and difficult
matter. Very difficult.

These two stones make an excellent transition to the next
section.

CHRISTIAN PICTURES AND SYMBOLS

As the noblest, first and biggest of these we have Harald Black-
tooth's Jelling stone with its confrontation of the "great beast"
– Satan or heathendom in general – and Christ himself, and
its numerous sacred triquetras, a symbol we also find on the
299 contemporary Tirsted stone (where we cannot tell whether it
has Christian significance or not).

*286 The *Sövestad stone* in Skåne has a picture of a bearded man
wearing a cloak or cape, kept together at the right shoulder by
a circular brooch. He has a pointed cap on his head, twisted
into a ball at the top. He carries a processional cross in one
hand. We may compare the picture of a knight on a romanesque
gravestone from Vejerslev, North Jutland (now in the National
Museum, Copenhagen) – he too lifts up a processional cross in
hope and prayer for the resurrection. Neither of the stones has
an inscription (cf. the stones at Hørdum and Sjellebro).

(Kirk Andreas, Man nr 128, "Thorvald's cross-slab", tenth
century – so they say – has a Ragnarök scene on one side and
on the other a nice chap, with a book in one hand and a
processional cross in the other, but no bonnet and no beard (?)
– he presumably represents the new faith.)

*273 Another Scanian stone with a distinct Christian motif on
257 it is the *Hyby stone*, set up in memory of the lady Folkvi, a
wealthy land-owner who – like Sir Tomme of the Skårby
stone – owned a whole village. (Some people have wanted to
read fulukui as the excellent man's name, Fullhugi: but we
cannot force it into the mould of our runes without doing grave
violence to the orthography.) The inscription has suffered a
good deal from wind and weather:

þurþr · hu · runar · þasi ... || fulukui : a : huk...

Thord hewed these runes ... Folkvi owns Høj[by – or perhaps a does not means “owns” but is a preposition?].

On this stone set up in memory of his lady (?) Thord carved a stag and two “crossed” crosses. A deer can be a symbol of the newly converted (Like as the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God – so Psalm 42). *272

On the reverse of the inscription side *Glenstrup stone 2*, North Jutland, has a picture of a stag followed by a hind. *287

tuki : sati : stin : þansi : iftir : ufla : faþur : sin : harþa : ku ||
þan : þign :

Toke placed this stone in memory of Uflå, his father, a very good “thegn”.

Uflar contains negative prefix *ú-* and adjective *flár* “deceitful”, so it means the frank and honest (but Wimmer suggested *Ufli*, diminutive of *ufi*, “owl”). The stag and hind do not make a particularly heathen impression. Stags are also extremely rare in Danish romanesque sculpture: known only on an ashlar in Tømmerby church (North Jutland) and on two fonts, both of which have the stag in hunting scenes.

And with that we come to the end of Christian pictures on Viking Age rune stones (we can only guess whether they were understood in a Christian way). But there are several crosses and some stones have rune ribbons that end in “lilies” – as for example on two Scanian stones, probably carved by the same man: Baldringe, whose inscription by no means suggests a Christian frame of mind, and Östra Herrestad, whose inscription is best described as neutral. Both have division marks now in the shape of a cross, now in the shape of two small vertical strokes one over the other, and both have the prepositional form *after*, but otherwise no tokens of late date.

Baldringe stone, Skåne:

þ þurkisl × sati × kubl × þausi × after × tuma × sban || frupar
sun × faþur × sin × harþa | kuþan | | þikn

*286

Thorgisl placed this monument in memory of Tomme the foresighted, his father, Frød's son, a very good "thegn".

It would be interesting to know what the monument had consisted of: if it were a heathen ship setting, one could hardly take the lily to be a Christian symbol.

*270 *Östra Herrestad stone, Skåne:*

† bruþir × auk × tuki × raisþu × stain × þansi × aftir × frapulf
× faþur × sin × harþa † † † kuþan × þiakn ×

Broder and Toke set up this stone in memory of Fradulv, their father, a very good "thegn".

PICTORIAL AND DECORATIVE ART [6]

Hitherto we have been chiefly concerned with the content of the pictures, their iconological import, what they portray or signify – or what we believe they signify. We can also look at them from an iconographic point of view, i.e. study their external characteristics to see what is typical and give them their place in Viking Age art – and in this connection we cannot ignore the decoration.

Denmark has in fact few examples of illustration and ornament on rune stones, and in this contrasts markedly with Sweden and Swedish-influenced Bornholm, where the art flourished after it had died out in Denmark proper. What Danish decoration there is is extremely simple: spirals, ribbon interlace, most often associated with acanthus foliage and snakes and a couple of "lilies".

The simplest decoration of all – and with a practical function as well – is the line on which the runes stand (Snoldelev, Øster Løgum); it can develop into a frame around the runes, either straight (Læborg, Randbøl) or following the outline of the stone (Horne, Skårby, Hunnestad). Double frame-lines can alternate with single or with none at all, as on Jelling 1 and 2, Bække 1, Baldringe and Hällestad 2, where the double lines end in sharp-pointed, two-eyed snakes' heads (seen from above). On Gorm's Jelling stone (face B), Skovlænge and others they end in spirals, and on the Tirsted stone in trique-

tras. At Baldringe they end in a lily with lateral spirals. In the *double outline* and the *spiral* we have two constantly repeated motifs that are as much characteristic of the Viking Age as the cartouche is of the high renaissance, as the lobe is of the baroque auricular style, as the shell-work is of rococo – and so on. But we must add yet another double line – the two small parallel lines that connect the spiral to the main band, a feature seldom lacking. Look at the “great beast” of Jelling 2: double outline and hip spirals; or at the Tullstorp stone: hip spirals and double outline – and the same on the ship (as at Bösarp too). Consult the drawings reproduced as well. But the double outline is not a dating criterion – ships carved with a single line (Hjermind, Spentrup, Sønder Kirkeby) are not necessarily later work than those with a double. On the London stone, the third stone with a “great beast” on it, the double outline has yielded to flat relief but the spirals remain.

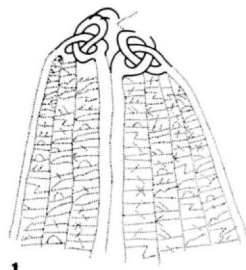
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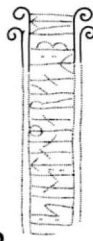
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If we consider *the three “great beasts”* – with a glance aside at the others – we may first observe that the artistic temper which we can call “Germanic” and which we first met on the bracteates remains true to itself in the Viking Age: all three carvings are masterpieces. The artists who created them were not interested in “naturalism” – they exuberantly extend extremities into ribbons and foliage and entwine the main elements with complete coils and waving ends.

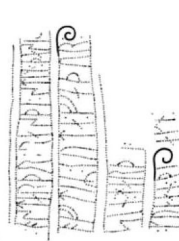
The Jelling animal, despite its fabulous nature, is in some degree naturalistic, or at least the most realistic of the three “great beasts”. It is truly a kingly beast, with towering neck, normal body, and sharp claws – most like the talons of a carrion bird – and the head is also a mixture of bird and mammal. The fine tufts of acanthus leaf which surmount the neck and terminate the tail are typical Viking Age features. All the other rune-stone beasts are more or less stylised – though the slinking footfall of the monstrous prowler on Lund stone 1 is admirably conveyed – and the London beast is almost suffocated by the serpent and acanthus tracery that surround it. But what on earth are all those flabby paws doing on all the other animals, without exception? Even the imposing Tullstorp “wolf” has the oddest rubber toes, and so has the paw-advancing “lion” on the Skårby stone. But apart from this last



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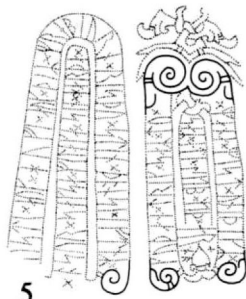
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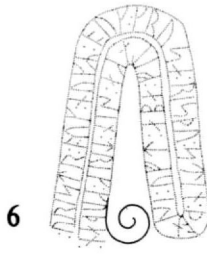
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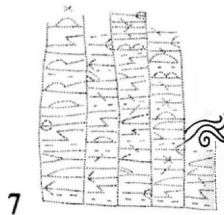
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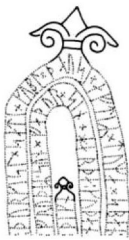
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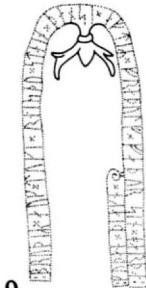
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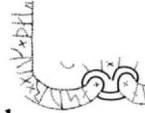
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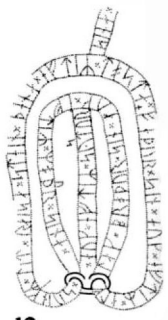
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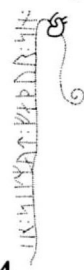
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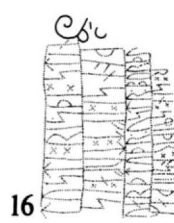
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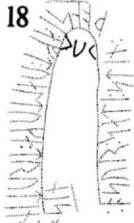
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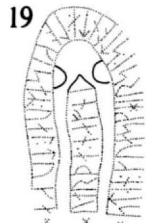
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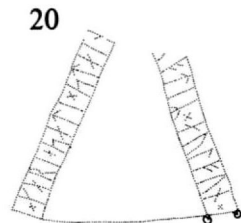
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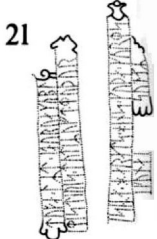
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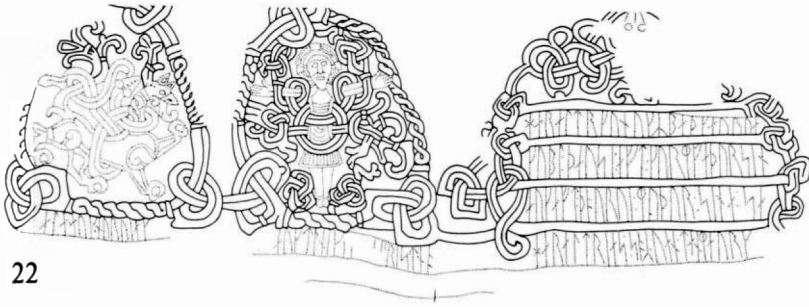
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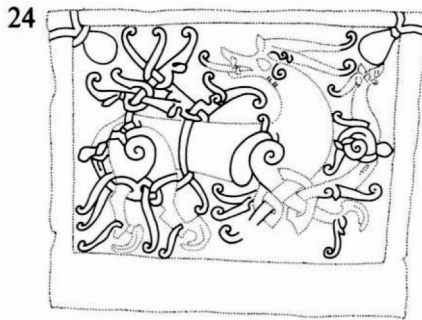
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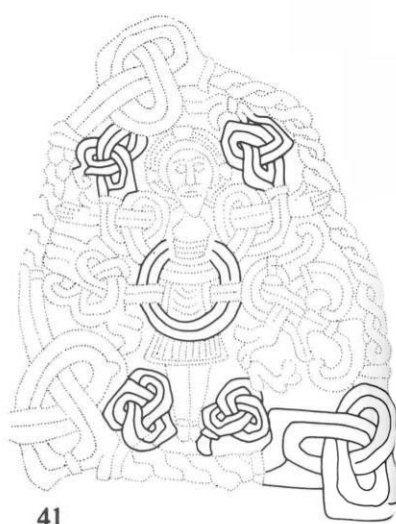
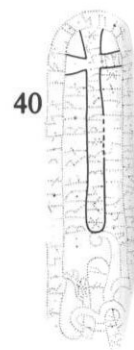
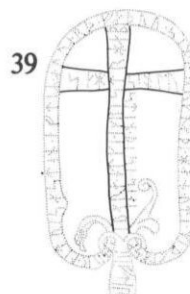
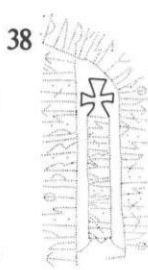
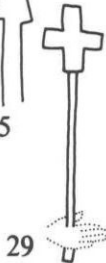
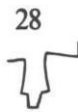
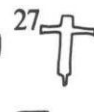
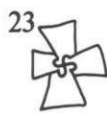
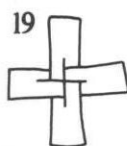
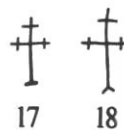
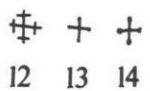
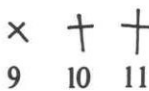
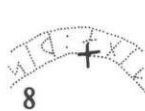
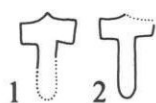
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Ornament. Triquetra, spiral, acanthus foliage, figure-of-eight, etc. 1. Tirsted (cf. 22). — 2. Jelling 1, face B, North Jutland. — 3. Skovlænge, Lolland. — 4. Haddeby 1, South Jutland. — 5. Århus 5, North Jutland. — 6. Stora Köpinge, Skåne. — 7. Grensten, North Jutland. — 8. Baldringe, Skåne. — 9. Östra Herrestad, Skåne. — 10. Lund slate 1, Skåne. — 11. Klemens 8, Bornholm. — 12. Klemens 3, Bornholm. — 13. Sønder Vissing 2, North Jutland. — 14. Øster Lars 2, face B, Bornholm. — 15. Lund 1, face C, Skåne. — 16. Kolind, North Jutland. — 17. Sædinge, faces A and B, Lolland. — 18. Års, face A, North Jutland. — 19. Års, face B, North Jutland. — 20. Bjäresjö 1, Skåne. — 21. Sønder Vissing 1, North Jutland. — 22. Jelling 2, North Jutland. — 23. Ørsted church ashlar, Fyn (medieval). — 24. London, England. Drawings by Thora Fisker.

one, all the animals are members of one family and all sired by the “great beast” of Jelling.

Completely *realistic animals* appear on Ålum stone 3 and the Hyby and Glenstrup stones, all post-Jelling.

*260



Hyby stone 1, Skåne. 110cm. Face A. Retouched photograph. — Erected in memory of a lady named Folkvi who, like the squire of Skårby, owned a whole village. It is shown to be a Christian stone both by the “crossed” cross and by the stag (like as the hart panteth after the water brooks ...). A date towards the close of the rune-stone age is indicated by the very unorthodox sweep of the inscription, which clearly appealed to the carver, Thord.



Symbols. *Heathen signs*. *Thor's hammer*: 1-2. Læborg, North Jutland. — 3. Spentrup 2, North Jutland. — 4. Karlevi, Öland. — 5. Gårdstånga 3, Skåne. — *Swastika*: 6. Snoldelev, Sjælland. — *Triskele*: 7. Snoldelev, Sjælland. — *Christian symbols* (not always put to Christian use), only from Period 2, the Viking Age. *Crosses*. *Single-line crosses*: 8. Holmby, Skåne (an addition). — 9. Sjörup, Skåne (an addition). — 10. Durup, North Jutland (an addition?). — 11. Vester Tørslev, North Jutland (an addition?). — 12-16. Lund 1, Skåne (employed with pagan symbols). — 17-18. Hyby 1, Skåne. — 19-23 (cf. 25) *Outline crosses with swastika inset*: 19. Hunnestad 2, Skåne (element in a pagan monument). — 20. Vester Marie 6, Bornholm. — 21. Ny Lars 2, Bornholm. — 22. Klemens 6, Bornholm. — 23. Valleberga, Skåne. — *With an inset single-line cross*: 24. Vester Marie 6, Bornholm. — 25-31. *Processional crosses*: 25. Øster Marie 6, Bornholm (with inset swastika). — 26. Alsted, Sjælland. — 27. †Allerum, Skåne. — 28. Rø, Bornholm. — 29. Sövestad 1, Skåne. — 30. Tillitse, Lolland. — 31. Øster Lars 1, Bornholm. — 32-34. “*Maltese*” crosses: 32. Sørup, Fyn (probably medieval). — 33. Bodils 5, Bornholm. — 34. Klemens 4, Bornholm. — *Latin cross*: 35. Stora Harrie, Skåne. — “*Propeller*” cross: 36. Øster Marie 3, Bornholm. — 38-40 *Crosses that make part of the inscription lay-out*: 38. Hørning, North Jutland. — 39. Ny Lars 1, Bornholm. — 40. Nyker, Bornholm. *Triangle*: 37. Øster Marie 5, Bornholm. — *Triquetra and circle*: 41. Jelling 2, North Jutland. Drawings by Thora Fisker.

Top left: Farsø stone, North Jutland. 180 cm. — Retouched photograph. This coarse stone with its incised ship outline was set up by Toste and Esbern in memory of their brother, Tue. The conjunction “and” is spelt uk, not auk. This form is quite proper from a linguistic point of view (the stone cannot be much younger than Jelling 2), but since the carver makes a mistake by omitting the vowel in rþu, it may be that uk for auk simply shows another omission. See the ship drawings.

*264

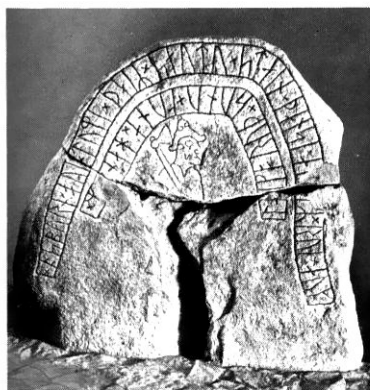
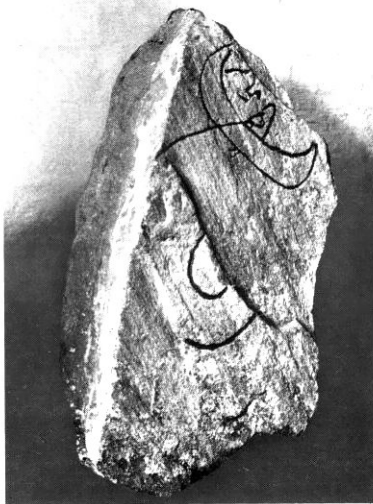
252 Top right: Hørdum stone, North Jutland. 125 cm. Retouched photograph. — Thor’s fishing for the World Serpent. He has got a bite and shoves so hard against the ship’s bottom that his foot goes through it. His giant companion, terrified when the Serpent’s head rises to the surface, cuts Thor’s fishing line and gets a box on the ear from Thor which sends him overboard. Thor hurls his hammer after the Serpent — and doesn’t get it back. This is a picture stone only — no runes. Was it part of a larger complex such as the Hunnestad and Västra Strö monuments?

250 Bottom left: Hunnestad stone 1, Skåne. 150 × 170 cm. Retouched photograph. — This maltreated stone, just one from Skåne’s greatest runic monument, was set up by Esbern and Tomme in memory of Ro and Legfrød, sons of Gunne Hand. Who is the man with the axe? Not Gunne Hand nor any of the others named in the inscription. There is never direct connection between text and picture on Viking Age monuments: that comes in the medieval period. See the Ørsted ashlar. Pictures on stones of the Migration and Viking Age refer to the world of myth. The axe-man is a supernatural being — whether a god or a giant we cannot tell.

250 Bottom right: Hunnestad stone 2, Skåne. 110 cm. — Esbern placed this stone in memory of Tomme, son of Gunne Hand. Cf. Hunnestad 1. On the cross symbol, see the caption to the Hunnestad monument.

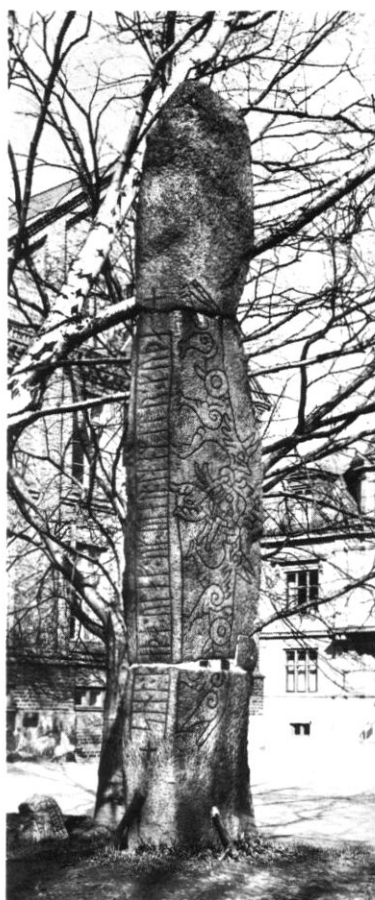
*262f. *Snakes* depicted on earlier Viking Age stones are viewed from above; they have pointed heads and two circular eyes[7]. This type survives alongside the later Viking Age snake which is viewed from the side. It has a long narrow head, a huge almond-shaped eye, a parted mouth which curls at top and bottom, originally with snout-tip and collar. The Bornholm examples are somewhat degenerate. Older stones show indifferent use of round and almond-shaped eyes.

*261 On *human figures* an attempt is made to give realistic pic-



tures of headgear and clothing. The pear-shaped head of Christ on Jelling 2 is a type which lives on into the romanesque period, readily found in the relief-carved heads of many church-wall ashlar. The axe-man on Hunnestad stone 1 — a fierce jaw he has — and the cross-man at Sövestad are certainly drawn from life. A variant of the axe-man's distinctive helmet perhaps appears on the Börsarp mask; but the Sövestad figure is sooner wearing a cap than a helmet. Both the axe-man and the giantess on Hunnestad 3 have a little gore at the neck of their garment,

250



- 255 Lund stone 1, Skåne. 400 cm. Face A, face B-C. Retouched photographs.
 — Thorgisl, son of Esge Bjørn's son, erected "these stones" in memory of his two brothers, who are called "good land-men", i.e. noble holders of estates, possibly with duties to perform as royal functionaries. — The stone is remarkable for its mixture of pagan and Christian symbols (two masks, one between two facing animals, four crosses), and offers a good example of the way memorials might be insured with both old faith and new at a time when they were competing for custom. It means however that the cross is not actually employed in a "Christian" way but as a talisman (cf. the Hunnestad monument).
- *251

- 255 well known from romanesque pictures of clothing, and the badly-worn figure on the Västra Strö stone is wearing the ankle-length dress and the cape of a Viking Age lady.

About the year 1000, or perhaps a little earlier, the acanthus leaf became petrified (as it were) in rune-stone art, acquiring a form which remained standard in Sweden and Bornholm until long after the end of the Viking Age. The leaf has a curled tip, a bend or notch in the side (which may give it a scimitar-like appearance), and a secondary shoot on the same side as the bend. It is very clear and well defined on the London stone — see the drawings. This form is still evolving on Jelling stone 2 (see the Christ side especially); but the “sword-type” is visible in several places, where the side-shoot is emerging (see e.g. the big triquetra at the bottom left of the “beast” side).

Rune stones provide faithful illustrations of axe (Hunnestad 1), shield, sword (Lund 1), standard and hammer. Drinking horns are on the Snoldelev stone.

Perhaps the drop-shaped decorative elements on the Kolind

*270

Ole Worm's prospect of the Västra Strö monument (which is still preserved complete). — Five of the seven stones have no inscription or ornament, nr 1 has runes and nr 2 has in addition to runes a mask and a divine couple. The man who commissioned this memorial could have called it *kumbl* (plural), a monument or monument complex, but all he says is that he had runes hewn in memory of the dead.



stone should be compared with those on the London stone? The Års stone has an impressive and well laid-out inscription but poverty-stricken ornament: the existence of the latter can surely only be ascribed to a *horror vacui* typical of the Viking Age? (Cf. also the stroke following the name of the patron on the Sædinge stone.)

*292

*272 The various types of cross speak for themselves. Most are processional crosses with a pole or peg at the bottom; it is the kind of cross which Jesus holds in romanesque resurrection scenes. The crosses enclosing a swastika are remarkable.

*272 The big “propeller” cross on the Øster Marie stone, Born-

255 Västra Strö stone 1, Skåne. 170 cm. Retouched photograph. — Fader (= father, but used as a proper name) had these runes hewn in memory of his brother, Asser, who met death in the north i uikiku, i *wikingu*, on a Viking foray. Strö stone 2 was put up by the same Fader in memory of a certain Björn, who had shared with him in owning a ship.





Holmby stone, Skåne. 115 cm. Retouched photograph. — The inscription, which has two dotted runes, only announces that a man set up “these stones” in memory of his father. But it is not that which makes the stone so interesting, nor the ship picture which guarantees it was set up by a firm adherent of the pagan gods. But look at the top curve of the rune ribbon — a little cross, hardly noticeable. Untidy as it is, it signifies that some member of this family became Christian and added a Christian cross to the stone to give an ancestor’s soul passage from purgatorial flames. The writer of a Swedish inscription foresees the possibility of this sort of thing happening and carves a curse against anyone who dares to “cross” his stone. — Perhaps we have more “crossed” rune stones to find in Denmark. (See symbols).

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*273

holm, probably came straight from Östergötland, though the type is not unknown in Uppland, see e.g. the Fresta stone there which — if it were not for its age, the early eleventh century — might well have been found on Bornholm [8].

The master who carved the Baldringe and Östra Herrestad stones was also responsible for the lost Stora Herrestad stone: all three were “lily” stones but with no other indication of

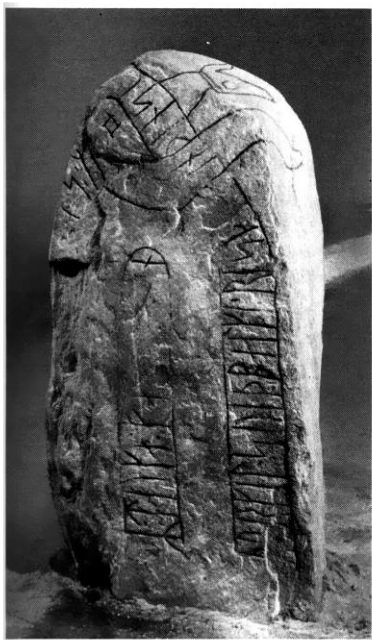
- *198 Christianity. So it is proper to regard the “lily” as pure ornament – though one never knows. We are totally in the dark as to the significance of the lumpy “lily” and equally lumpy “finger” decoration on the Sønder Vissing stone set up by Tove, the wife of Harald Blacktooth.

- 265 Sporup stone, North Jutland. 135 cm. Retouched photograph. – This badly treated stone is a new discovery. It gives us a new and rare nickname, Svidbalke, and the remains of a clumsy and rather amateurish snake. From about 1000 ± 25 .

On the right: the Lem stone, North Jutland. 106 cm high (the top, bottom and back are split away). Retouched photograph. – Discovered in 1957 in the side-wall of the churchyard steps, where it sat with its runes towards the treads. But it was not discovered (by the gravedigger) until some fifty years after the steps were built, because the mason, when he had finished the job, took his hammer and bashed out the runes still visible above the level of the steps – luckily not all of them. It is not the only time a mason has destroyed runes to make sure that “his” stone would not be taken away from him. All one can make out now is that NN set up the stone in memory of urik (*Urik* or *Wrig*), his brother.

- 265 Simris stone 1, Skåne. 170 cm. – Set up by Bjarnger in memory of his brother, Ravn, who was “sven” – a young retainer – of Gunulv in Sweden. – The runes are Danish (þ = o), but the ornament is totally Swedish, or more precisely, Upplandic. Estimated date: some years after 1050.

- 265 On the right: Simris stone 2, Skåne. 150 cm. Retouched photograph. – Perhaps a “royal” stone? Sigrev had this stone set up in memory of Forkun . . . father of Asulv, Knud’s “dreng”. God help his spirit. – When a man is lauded for being the father of a “dreng” – a young man-at-arms – with a certain Knud, then Knud must be a man of exceptional standing. Could it be King Knud the Great? The inscription is a mixture of Danish and Swedish runes, the ornament has its nearest relations in Södermanland. Estimated date: c. 1025.





Skårby stone 1, Skåne. 240 cm. Retouched photograph. — This stone was set up over a man of property, Tomme ir ati kupis snaba, who owned (the village of) Gusnava — which still exists, though doubtless rather larger now than it was about 1000 — even so, the jewel of Tomme's domains. The rearing animal is unique. If it is a lion, it is Denmark's first. — Skårby stone 2 was set up by Aute in memory of Hakon.

NOTES

- 1 R.I. Page has rightly observed (*Med. Arch.* 1978, p. 269) that the interpretation of the wolf-mounted giant woman as Hyrrokin — which goes back at least to N.H. Sjöborg (1767-1838) — is not absolutely assured because wolf-steed and snake-reins were normal attributes of the troll-woman or ogress (cf. *Helgakviða Hjörvarðssonar*). But is it not a problem to explain the presence of a common — or — garden giantess on the Hunnestad monument? Hyrrokin herself has a self-evident function to perform — precisely the same as she performed at Baldr's funeral. She is there to guarantee that the two dead men really get under way on their last voyage. (Saxo's

account of Balderus seems mostly his own invention and will hardly suffice as an argument to show the Danes told a different story from Snorri's.)

- 2 Martin Blindheim and Anne Holtmark, *Sigurds saga i middelalderens billedkunst*. Universitetets Oldsaksamling, Oslo, 1972-73. There is on the other hand absolutely no trace of motifs from Norse mythology and legend in the romanesque art of Denmark.
- 3 Johs. Brøndsted, *Thors fiskeri*, Nationalmuseets Arbejdsmark, 1955, pp. 92 ff. See further J.T. Lang, *Illustrative carving . . .*, *Archaeol. Aeliana . . .*, Fourth series, Vol. L (The Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1972), pp. 235 ff.
- 4 Marie Simonsen (now Stoklund), *Farsø-runestenen, Fra Himmerland og Kjær Herred* 1958, pp. 246 ff.
- 5 *Skalk* 1957, nr 4, pp. 5 ff.
- 6 Archaeologists divide the Viking Age into no fewer than six "styles", which are really no more than phases and variants of the same stylistic tendency. The division is probably found at its most clear cut in P.G. Foote and D.M. Wilson, *The Viking Achievement*, 1970, p. 287: *Style III* before 850, *Borre style* 840-980, *Jelling style* 870-1000, *Mammen style* (with Jelling stone 2 as its chief monument) 960-1020, *Ringerike style* 980-1090, *Urnes style* 1050-1170. The authors acknowledge that it is often difficult to define the style in which an object is decorated, because of shifting mutual influence. To this disadvantage may be added the fact that they date the chief monument of the Mammen style, Harald Blacktooth's Jelling stone, to between 983 and 985 — which is some twenty years later than the true date (cf. p. 213). In connection with the Urnes style, it ought to be noted that there is a standing debate as to the age of the first Urnes church — Roar Hauglid dates it to c. 1100 (*Norske stavkirker*, 1969).
- 7 On Jelling 1 Erling Johansen and Aslak Liestøl have discovered (and photographed two snake heads missed by all previous examiners. See Erling Johansen — Aslak Liestøl. *Kong Haralds "mishandlede" Jelling sten*. Kuml 1983, p. 209f.
- 8 Illustrated by S.B.F. Jansson, *RunSverige*, p. 87.

Runes reflect society

Great men. We saw from the preceding chapter that at the summit of Danish society stood a king. We are told nothing of the extent of his power, but Harald Blacktooth's memorial to his mother and father is Denmark's biggest and grandest. No king can rule without helpers, just as no land-owner can manage his estates single-handed. A king must have counsellors, officials, guards, bailiffs to look after his scattered lands and receive dues and services, an army (cf. Trelleborg, Fyrkat and the other fortresses) and a navy, each with its chain of command. We can take all this for granted – with or without sources. But what do runic inscriptions tell us about it?

We hear nothing of a royal council and no “marshall” (*stallari*) is mentioned (an officer we meet in a Swedish inscription [1]), but inscriptions do refer to the king's *hempægar*, “home-receivers”, men he has received into his household. This word is generally considered the equivalent of ON *hirð-maðr*, retainer, member of the *hirð* of a king or great man. The word *hirð* is believed to be a loan from Anglo-Saxon, where *hired* was used of the royal household, *familia* or retinue. Otherwise we have no specific early Danish technical term for such high-placed attendants. Among the “home-receivers” were doubtless included what we might call “ministers” – of finance, war, home affairs. Another old term for retainer, *huskarl*, whether serving a king or other lord, is perhaps recorded on the Danish stone in Winchester. We may presume that the ranks of the retinue were filled by “thegns”, “drengs” and “svens” (Old Norse *þegn*, *drengr*, *sveinn*), all recruited from the best families in the country (and abroad). Great lords could also have *hempægar*, so we cannot tell whether Simris 2 refers to King Knud the Great in describing Asulv as Knud's “dreng”. But the fact that the dead Forkun is lauded specifically as the father of Asulv, Knud's “dreng”, makes one wonder.

What lies in the words which are added time and again in Viking Age inscriptions – and in later inscriptions still on Bornholm – to the name of the dead man (in the accusative): *harþa goþan þegn*, *harþa goþan dreng*? Literally, a very good “thegn”, a very good “dreng”.

An expression on the Glavendrup stone has caused scholars particular trouble. The dead man, Alle, is described as *gode* (priest) of the Sølver, which is relatively intelligible, but he is also described as “honour-worthy thegn of the *uia*-host”. The last words here, *uia liþ*, have no obvious explanation. The first element has been interpreted in various ways, most commonly as the genitive plural of Norse *vé*, pagan sanctuary (it can also mean “home”). The second element, *liþ*, means host, troop, body of men, and might thus also be applied to the armed retinue or bodyguard (*hirp*) of a leader, for which the ON *drótt* was also used. The word *liþi* in the Karlevi inscription means a member of a Viking band or ship’s company, a follower or retainer [2]. It would seem rather ludicrous however to translate the Glavendrup words as “honour-worthy thegn of the troop of the sanctuaries”, but clearly *uia* must in some way provide a closer definition of the *liþ* (something like the local levy, the Home Guard?) [3].

To Ludvig Wimmer the “thegn” was the free peasant – a married householder farming inalienable family land – and the “dreng” was his son. Other scholars have taken the same line. In 1945, for example, Karl Martin Nielsen [4] wrote that “thegn” could be the term for a free farmer on allodial land, not insofar as such men constituted a distinct social class but seen as individuals who were free and had full civic and political rights (Wimmer’s opinion but expressed in a more roundabout way). K.M. Nielsen argued against views put forward by Svend Aakjær way back in 1927. The latter maintained that the Scandinavian “thegns” and “drengs” were – like their Anglo-Saxon counterparts – royal “servants”, members of the group of nobles who gave the king personal service and other members of his retinue or bodyguard. The Glavendrup inscription provides the earliest Danish example of a “thegn” (it is probably a couple of generations older than Gorm’s Jelling stone), and since it is there associated with *liþ*, host,



- 266 Sövestad stone 1, Skåne. 165 cm. Retouched photograph. — A picture stone with no runes on it. Nothing suggests it has any connection with
- 295 Sövestad 2, erected in memory of a man who was “best of *bomenn*” and “most bountiful with food”. The figure portrayed is that of a man in a cloak, with helmet or cap, and he is holding a processional cross. A corresponding figure, but here a knight, is portrayed on a romanesque tombstone from Vejerslev, North Jutland (cf. Fr. Beckett, *Danmarks Kunst I*, 1924, p. 242).
- 267 On the right: the Baldringe stone, Skåne. 140 cm. Retouched photograph. — Thorgisl placed this monument in memory of Tomme the Foresighted, Frød’s son, his father, a very noble “thegn”. The expression *sætia kumbl*, where *kumbl*, though plural, must be taken to mean simply “stone”, suggests a relatively late date. The dividing marks suggest the same. But are the lilies Christian symbols? — Hardly.

warband or the like, we may reasonably assume it denoted a kind of military status. “Thegn” is then a title of rank (cf. the man dubbed knight in the middle ages or commissioned as an officer today). There may well have been grades among the “thegns” as well, for *pegna fyrstr* — first among “thegns” (on the Södra Villie stone) — and the “very noble theng” ex-



Glenstrup stone 2, North Jutland. 150 cm. Retouched photographs. — Toke placed this stone in memory of Ufla (the un-deceitful), his father, a very noble “thegn”. The stone was probably carved in the reign of Sven Forkbeard, and the hart-and-hind picture on the reverse side is equally probably Christian.

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pression used elsewhere are not perhaps to be taken as mere gravestone panegyric.

Who bestowed this title — perhaps following Anglo-Saxon precedent? Private individuals do not seem to have had “thegns”, so it must have been the ruler’s prerogative to appoint “thegns” (and certain “drengs”). We thus come to the same conclusion as Svend Aakjær — or not far off it. We may assume that “thegns” and certain “drengs” were associated in some way with the king’s military organisation. Many of them were probably quite simply his *hempægar*, members of his household who acted as advisers, administrators and commanders. And once



Hjermind stone 1, North Jutland. 165 cm. Retouched photograph. — Tholv set up this stone in memory of his brother, Rade, a very noble “drengr”. On the other side there is a ship’s hull incised, now badly weathered: there is no trace of a mast but there could well have been one all the same; the weathering also leaves us in doubt as to how prow and stern were finished.

a “thegn”, always a “thegn”. After a period of service in attendance on the king, he remained a “thegn” but was now a captain or colonel of the reserve. Some “thegns” were probably given official functions in the countryside, at royal residences and on crown demesnes, bailiffs or revenue collectors or the like. Others doubtless returned to run their own family estates. This is the picture of “thegns” that *can* be drawn from Anglo-Saxon parallels and the occurrence of the word in runic inscriptions.

It will be self-evident that “thegns” were drawn from the best families in the country. If proof were needed, it could be found in the adjective “good” and “very good” applied to them, for as well as a qualitative sense (a good comb) and an

Bjerregrav stone 2, North Jutland. 140 cm. Retouched photograph. — Gode (or Gyde) set up this stone in memory of Thorbjørn, a very noble “thegn”. And Thord carved these runes. The stone was discovered in 1884 underneath the big, flat Bjerregrav stone 1, which was doing service as a threshold stone in the south door of Bjerregrav church. We are told that it lay “apparently without serving as a foundation for the building or having any connection with it” — from which the informant infers (mistakenly) that the intention was to tread these heathen stones under foot.



ethical sense (*fapur sin gopan*), this also had a social significance in keeping with the medieval use of “good men” to mean nobles, men of standing. A translation of *gopr* as “noble” (modern Danish *velbyrdig*, well-born, as in DaRun) is certainly the nearest we can get. If a man or woman has the qualities that befit illustrious birth, then he or she is “good”. The usage in the runic inscriptions reveals that “thegns” were generally older than “drengs” — but even so, a “thegn” need not have been more than twenty-four or twenty-five; and no rule lays it down that he had to be married — it was not marriage that set him apart from the “dreng”.

And a “dreng” was not just a young hobbledehoy — he could be a responsible adult. This must at least have been the

case with Erik on Haddeby 1, partner of Thoruly, Sven Forkbeard's retainer. Erik is called *styrimaþr*, a ship's captain, and *drengr harþa goþr*, a very noble "dreng". If "dreng" were not in this set phrase here, we might have been tempted – in view of the preceding sentence, "when drengs besieged Hedeby" – to translate it as "a very bold man" or "a jolly good chap" – but that will certainly not meet the case, although "dreng" (and "sven") – but not "thegn" in the same way – came to have wider connotations, partly denoting a servant function, partly more generalised. Hällestad stone 1, for example, was set up by "drengs" in memory of their leader and Viking "brother", and here *drengiar* could be quite justifiably translated as "comrades".

The king must have had "drengs" as well as "thegns" in his household, though we do not know whether they were under his direct command or were subordinate to "thegns" (or

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Sjørind stone, North Jutland. Only just over 60 cm. Retouched photograph. — Åse placed this stone in memory of her husband, Åmunde, who had been a retainer (*hembægi*) of Finulv. The same Åse also placed the lost Torup stone T (in the same district) in memory of another man (her father or first husband?), who had been the *hembægi* of Saka-Juter. If we are to go by the height of the stones (the Torup stone was nearly 200 cm.), she had most regard for her Torup man. The Sjørind stone is one of the smallest Viking Age rune stones in Denmark.

Hällestad stone 2, Skåne. 120 cm. Retouched photograph. — The stone was set up by Asgot in memory of his brother who was a retainer of Toke — certainly the Toke Gormsson who did not flee at Uppsala and in whose honour Hällestad 1 was raised. Hällestad 2 ends with the pair of verse lines which we know from elsewhere: *Nu skal standa / sten a biargi* — Now shall stand the stone on the mound.



both). Simris 2 speaks of Knud's "dreng" but, as we saw above, we cannot decide whether this was King Knud or a private citizen.

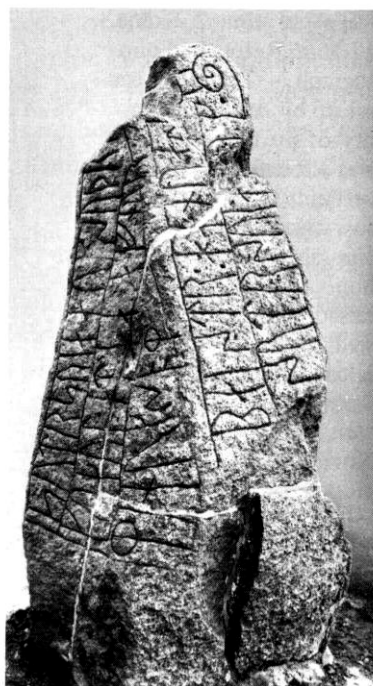
We meet royal *hempægar* on Haddeby 1 and 3, but on two neighbouring stones in Thisted county we are introduced to the *hempægar* of lesser lords. These are the lost Torup stone and the Sjørind stone (a puny little "magnate" stone).

Sjørind stone, North Jutland:

: ąsa : sati : stin : þansi : iftir : | ąmuta : uir (:) sin : is : uar : ||
himþiki : finulfs

Åse placed this stone in memory of Åmunde, her man (husband), who was Finulv's retainer (*hempægi*).

*290



Face A-B

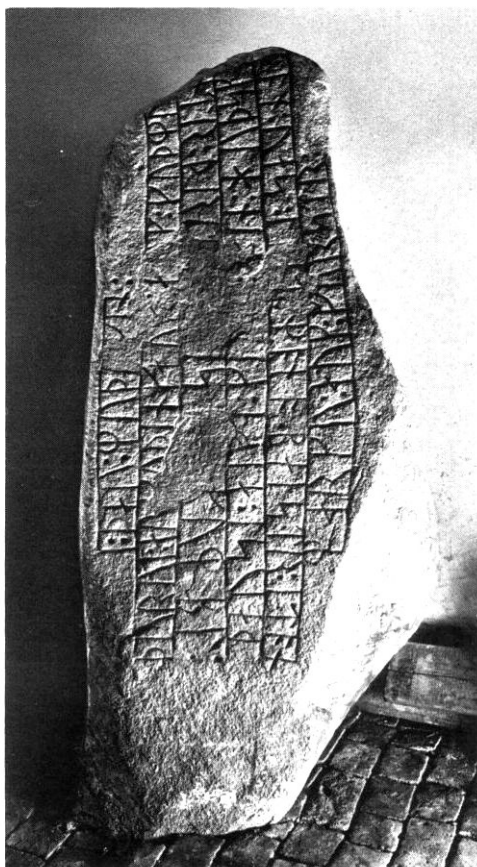
þurui : kat : kauruan
 stain : þansi : ...
 (kruk) · ||
 uia[r] : [s]in : ian : han(?)uas
 ..alra · triu...

Face C-D

sutrsuia[:]au(k)supr[tana-]
 kuaul : at : ha?afnur
 minumsam ||
 baistr : hanuas
 ...sutrsuia : ?uk

- 300 Sædinge stone, Lolland. 175 cm. Retouched photographs. — Set up by a great lady, Thorvi (Thyre), in memory of her husband, Krog, who was *driúgastr* — staunchest — of all (?). The “pains” of the “Sunder-Swedes” and the South Danes “ate” him — i.e. killed him — of Northmen (of Scandinavians) the best, the ? of the “Sunder-Swedes” ?? — Sad that we do not know the political circumstances and the events that led to the death of this chieftain as reported in the charged metaphorical language of the inscription. But it clearly belongs among Lolland’s “Swedish” stones.
- 290 The same Åse set up the †*Torup stone* in memory of Toke (?), perhaps her father, who was killed on ...-heath : uk uas himþi-ki saka iutis — and was the retainer of Saka-Juter.

Skivum stone, North Jutland. 200 cm. Retouched photograph. – The monument (*kumbl*, plural) was made in memory of a man who had “the hupski” as a cognomen (whatever that means), and he was the best of “land-men” in Denmark and the first. A man of standing – even if there is some elegiac exaggeration in the testimony. A “land-man” was not the straightforward agriculturist the term might suggest to us but probably a great land-owner, a man who “ruled over land in Denmark”, to quote the Karlevi stanza, and possibly at the same time a man with responsibilities on behalf of the crown. We do not know exactly.



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We can probably also infer status as a retainer from the *Skern inscription*, where the dead Odinkar is praised as “lord-loyal”, but whether his lord was the king or some other great man we cannot tell.

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At Hällestad in Skåne we have three really first-class “magnate” stones. The leader or lord commemorated is Toke Gormsson, who fell in battle at Uppsala about the year 1000.

Hällestad stone 1, Skåne (which ends with a stanza):

: askil : sati : stin : þansi: ift[ir] | : tuka : kurms : sun : sar :
 hulan : | trutin : sar : flu : aigi : at : ub : | : salum || satu :
 trikar : iftir : sin : bruþr | stin : a : biarki : stuþan : runum :
 þir : || (kurms : tuka) : kiku : (nist)[ir]

*191

Eskil placed this stone in memory of Toke Gormsson, his lord gracious to him. He fled not at Uppsala. “Drengs” in memory of their brother placed a stone on the hill, made firm with runes. They marched closest to Gorm’s Toke.

*291 *Hällestad stone 2, Skåne* (ends with a verse couplet):
 : askautr : ristþi : stin : þansi (:) | (i)ftir : airu : brþur : sin : ian :
 | : sar : uas : him : þiki : tuka : nu : | : skal : stata : stin : a :
 biarki

Asgot set up this stone in memory of Ærre, his brother. And he was retainer of Toke. Now shall stand the stone on the hill.

Hällestad stone 3, Skåne:

: asbiurn : him : þaki : tuka : sati : stin | : pasi : iftir : tuka :
 brþur : sin :

Esbern, retainer of Toke, placed this stone in memory of Toke, his brother.

To gain a proper understanding of the words about not fleeing at Uppsala, we must turn to the Sjörup stone. The men mentioned on it have nothing to do with those on the Hällestad stones, though they may have fought on the same side.

Sjörup stone, Skåne:

<+> saksi : sati : stin : pasi : huftir : asbiurn : sin : filagn (†
 error for † a) (:) | tufas (tukas) : sun | sar : flu : aki : at : ub :
 salum : an : ua : maþ : an : u | abn : afpi .

Saxe placed this stone in memory of Esbern, his partner, Tue’s (Toke’s) son. He did not flee at Uppsala but fought as long as he had a weapon.

We do not know what battle this was at Uppsala. It has been identified with a famous encounter on the banks of the River Fyris that is thought to have taken place c. 980. In that case, the Hällestad and Sjörup stones would be roughly contemporary with the two Sven Forkbeard stones, Haddeby 1 and 3. Such a dating cannot be rejected with any kind of certainty; they have the old form uas, not uar (“was”), and pansi (with

Sövestad stone 2, Skåne. 150 cm. Retouched photograph. — While the Skivum stone was set up to honour the best and first of Danish “land-men”, Sövestad 2 was erected by wife and son, Tonne and Asgot, to commemorate Bram, who was the best of *bomenn* and *mildastr matar* — most bountiful with food, words probably taken from a poem. We do not know exactly what “land-man” meant, and we are just as badly off when we come to “bu-man” — though we may be permitted to conjecture that he too administered estates and perhaps acted as some kind of royal bailiff.



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a, not a) is as old as Glavendrup. We can hardly invest the cross on the Sjörup stone with any chronological significance (it is most likely a later addition). There has been some discussion of the meaning of *stuþan runum* on Hällestad 1, “supported by runes”, but probably the *stuþan* is no more than a line-filler introduced for the sake of the alliteration. There has also been some disagreement as to the purport of “he fled not”. Some have thought it an example of *litotes* (corresponding to the habit of understatement in some modern speech — “it’s not so bad” is high praise in Jutland, for instance), others take it as a literal (comparative) statement: he did not run away (but some others did). But we can see from the verse conclusion on the Sjörup stone that the latter interpretation is the right one — for if others had not fled, that sentence would be superfluous. But however details are understood, one thing is certain.

224



Randbøl stone, North Jutland. Retouched.

185 cm. — In its split and clumsily reassembled shape, this is the ugliest rune stone in Denmark — but its inscription is the most beautiful and touching of all. The overseer Tue put up the stone in memory of his wife — he calls her his “playmate” or perhaps his “match” — and ends with a verse that says that “these staves for Thorgun will live very long”. It is the only Danish stone that was discovered and still stands on its original site, on or beside Thorgun’s grave-mound on Randbøl heath.

- 236 The Skern stone and these Scanian stones just discussed speak eloquently of those qualities which came to be most highly valued in the European “age of chivalry” that followed: loyalty to lord and comrades and personal courage. The young warriors call themselves “drengs” and “brothers”, and their lord is “brother” to them as well. He is *primus inter pares*, first among equals, but — like Knud the Great among his retainers — the leader was subject to the same laws as the rest of the fraternity.

It is not always possible to see from the wording of an inscription whether the stone was set up by or in memory of a lord (or lady); but it is obvious that plain announcements (A set up the stone in memory of B) on monuments as grandiose as those at Hunnestad, Strö and Tullstorp-Bösarp were not carved for folk of low degree. The same naturally applies to

the extensive memorials of Tryggevælde and Glavendrup, and the Thjodvi of the Gørlev stone probably belonged to one of the best Sjælland families as well. We are left in no doubt when inscriptions such as those of Skårby and Hyby tell us of people who owned whole villages. And when the Egå inscription describes a man as *landhirpir* – factor – of Ketil the Norwegian, we can be equally confident that Ketil was one of the magnates of the time.

226 224
158
257 266

Nor can there be any doubt that the stones raised in memory of “land-men” and “estate-men”, *landmenn* and *bumenn*, were also memorials to men of consequence, since these designations apparently had nothing to do with lands and estates in any straightforward agricultural sense. It is a much more plausible assumption (though it remains just that) that these terms denoted “officials”, men who may have had much land of their own but were notable because they looked after the king’s affairs in their locality [5].

We have two *landmaþr* inscriptions and one *bumaþr* inscription. One of the former, on Lund stone 1, has been cited above. This is Denmark’s tallest rune stone, peculiar in its mixture of pagan and Christian, for it is more likely to have been made after AD 1000 than before. The monument, which originally consisted of several stones, was commissioned by Thorgisl in memory of his brothers, lanmitr kuþa, *landmændr goþa* – noble “land-men”.

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The fine *Skivum stone* in North Jutland has the following inscription:

*293

: þau : muþ(r)kin : | þurui : auk [:] uþinkau(r) : a(u)k : kuþmu
| ntr : þri[u : ra]is(þ)[u :] kumbl : | þausi : aift : ki?? : hin :
huþska | han : uas : l(ā)nt : maṇa : baistr : i : taṇ | marku :
auk : furstr:

Mother and sons, Thorvi (Thyre) and Odinkar and Gudmund, those three set up this monument in memory of K... (G...) the huþski. He was best and first of “land-men” in Denmark [6].

Given that the term “land-men” basically refers to a man living in the countryside or to a man who “rules over land”

(as the Karlevi inscription has it), and seeing that the Skivum writer then adds “in Denmark”, it seems rather difficult to interpret it except as a title of some kind – not exactly a fief-holding baron but perhaps something in that direction?

The term *bumapr*, “estate-man”, ought on the other hand to mean a man who is a householder, resident on his own land.

*295 *Sövestad stone 2, Skåne:*

× tuna × sati × stain × þansi × aftir × bram × bunta : sin ×
 auk × askutr × sunr × hans × han × uar × bastr × bumana ×
 auk × | × miltastr × matar

Tonne placed this stone in memory of Bram, her husband, and (so did) Asgot, his son. He was best of *búmenn* and most bountiful with food.

We have fewer grounds for taking *bumapr* to be an official title. It makes excellent sense if taken in a straightforward way, not least when seen in conjunction with the inscription’s praise for a virtue which our ancestors counted no less important than loyalty and courage. If we were to interpret the term as a title, we could visualise Bram as actually living at the hub of his responsibilities, i.e. as some kind of royal bailiff – but now we are on thin ice.

Swedish rune stones also praise hospitality. Two Uppland stones, for example, laud a dead man because he was liberal with food (and eloquent) [7]. In a Småland inscription a man makes verse in praise of his dead brother, Sven, who was “gentle with his folk, generous with food, in great esteem with all people” [7].

It may doubtless be taken for granted that the king had overseers or bailiffs (*bryti* – the name originally referred to the man who portioned out the food), and like Ketil the Norwegian he must have had “estate-stewards”, factors, too. The
 *296 beautiful inscription, partly in verse, on the *Randbøl stone*, North Jutland, may refer to a *king’s* overseer. When the stone was found in 1874, a stone-cutter split it into several pieces. Those with the runes on them were then put together again to make a clumsy and unattractive “stone”, which was mounted at the find-spot. They have now been separated again and are

to be reassembled in a more appropriate fashion. It is the only Danish rune stone sited on a mound in association with a grave that is presumably contemporary. The inscription has the old short form *aft* (not *aftir*) but *þansi* without nasal *a* (but as already noted more than once, this is as old as the Glavendrup stone). With simple charm the runes tell us: 224

tufi | bruti | rispi | stin | þansi | aft | lika | brutia | þir | stafar
| munu | | þurkuni | miuk | liki | lifa |

Tue the overseer set up this stone in memory of the wife (literally either “playmate” or “(equal) match”) of the overseer. These staves for Thoigun will live very long. This last sentence is in verse:

*þeR stafaR munu
þorgunni
miok længi lifa*

Two stones from Lolland, one from Tirsted – a huge boulder – and one from Sædinge, were also “magnate” stones. Both are difficult to interpret, the former because the carver seems to have been a bungler and not equal to his task, the latter because it has been maltreated and parts split away.

The Tirsted stone, Lolland, was a sacred stone before it was exploited as a runic memorial; it is covered with circular depressions, large and small, through which the carver blithely cut his runes. His lettering is indeed good and deep, but he straightway muddles the name of one of his patrons, leaves out a word which he then sticks into the frame on the far left of face A, writes *franti* instead of *franta*, writes “his” twice, is careless with *r*- and *u*-runes, cuts many inferior *f*-runes, and makes a deplorable job of aligning his main staves. We see a man who was a good stone-carver – his ornamentation shows that – but who was illiterate or at any rate not a master of runic writing and copying. The defects mentioned above and more than one incomprehensible sequence of runes in the inscription make that a reasonable conclusion. *301

It is worth noticing that the two “knots” which terminate the framelines at the top are sacred triquetra symbols, much

discussed in connection with the Jelling stone. Here it is not possible to decide whether they have a pagan function or not, i.e. whether they are magic apotropaic signs or evidence that the stone was commissioned by people professing Christianity. Their presence makes it reasonable to attribute the stone to the Mammen–Jelling period, i.e. not long after 950. The inscription reads:

asraþraukhiltu(i)kr | raisþustainþansi | aftfraftafrantisin |
 sinianhanuasþafaink | uaira || ianhanuarþtauprasua | þiaua-
 þuaukuasfurs | ifrikisiþiþaalirukikar

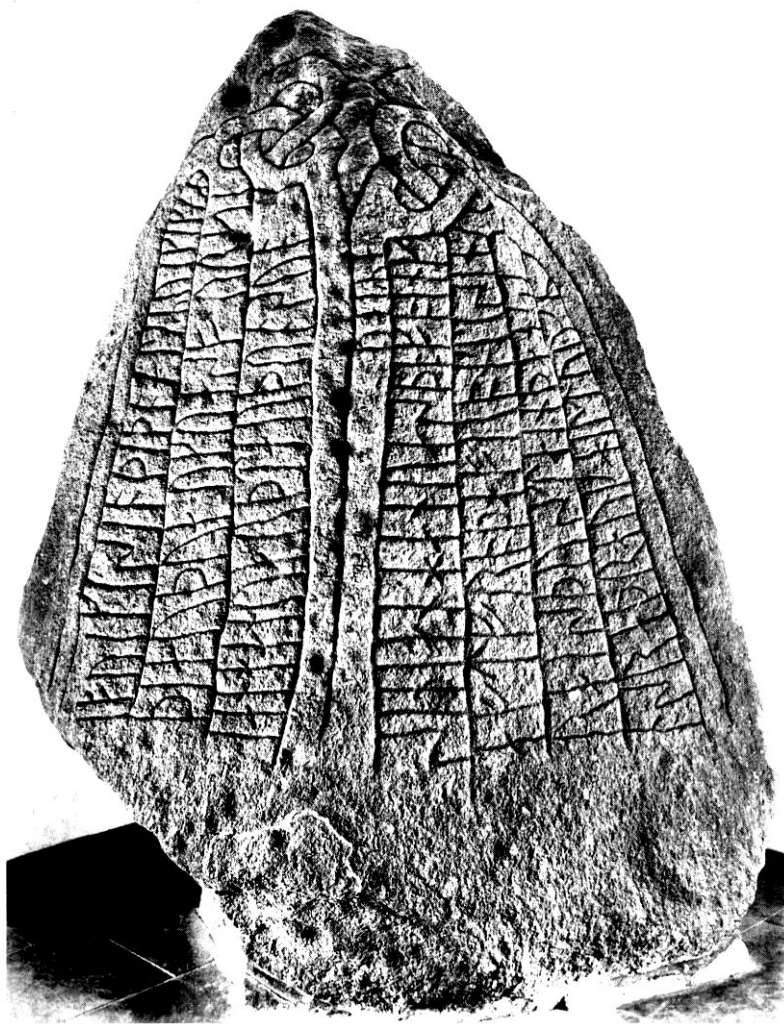
In addition to the errors already mentioned, there are at least two other places where the carver has got into a mess: as it stands, the sequence *faink* is meaningless, though it must be a distortion of some laudatory term – he was the *faink* of men – be it “adornment”, “pride” (cf. “staunchest of all” on the Sædinge stone) – or (reading *fæikn*) “terror”. The other certainly erroneous word is *iþi* in the last line: if *frikis* is a proper name in the genitive, one might expect a word for host or troop (*lip*). Possibly then *furs* may be a mistake for *furstr*, first, foremost. So with all possible reservations I suggest the following translation:

Asrād and Hildvig (?) set up this stone in memory of Frede, their kinsman. And he was then the terror (?) of men and he met death in Sweden and was the foremost of Fregge’s host; and then: all vikings.

The very size of the boulder marks it out as a great man’s memorial.

*292 *Sædinge stone*, Lolland.

Thorvi (Thyre) had this stone made in memory of Krog, her man (husband); and he was [then] staunchest (?) of all. The Sunder–Swedes’ and the South Danes’ “pains” ate (i.e. killed) him, of Northmen the best. He was [then] the Sunder–Swedes’ ?uk.



Tirsted stone, Lolland. 225 × 140 cm. Retouched photograph. — Denmark's second largest rune stone, set up by Asráð and Hildvig (or Hildung) in memory of their kinsman, Frede, who met his death in Sweden, presumably on a Viking foray. Executed by a competent carver though in all probability he did not understand much of what he was inscribing and that is why he made such awful mistakes. — The rune ribbons are bound at the top by the sacred triquetra, which in Viking Age Denmark is otherwise only found on Jelling 2; but whether here on the Tirsted stone it was meant as pure ornament or had pagan or Christian significance cannot be decided.

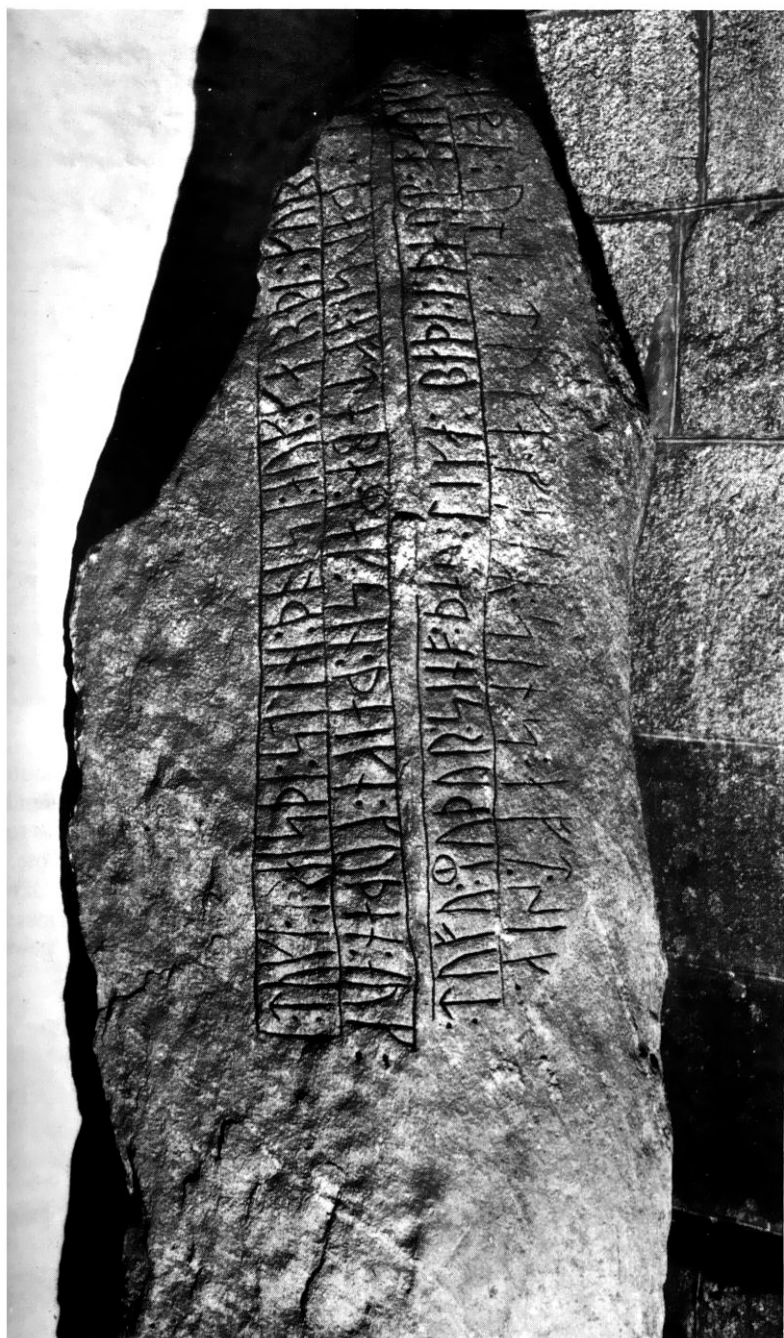
299

The inscription appears to refer to strife between Swedes called “Sunder” or “Separate” Swedes (?), living on Lolland, and “South Danes”. (The existence of these Swedes is probably evidenced by the Tirsted stone and the much younger Tillitse stone.) It would not be unnatural if some Swedes on their way to Hedeby succumbed to the charms of Lolland – the name “Sunder-Swedes” (if it does not mean “South Swedes”) might suggest that quite a number remained there. The stone is roughly contemporary with Jelling 2, and the conflicts it refers to between Swedes and Danes could be seen against the background of the more-or-less tense relations that must have existed between the Swedish rulers in Hedeby and the Danish royal house in Jelling. If the inscription were complete, we might possess a graphic piece of Danish history. Now we do not even know whether Krog was the “end” (luk) or the “yoke” (auk) of the “Sunder-Swedes”. He may have been a Swede married to a Dane (as Gnupa in Hedeby was); but his name could be Danish too. The ravages of time and the splitting-wedges of the stone-mason are against us.

Two more inscriptions must be singled out among the “magnate” stones, the large Gunderup stone from Alborg county and the Asmild stone from near Viborg.

In Ole Worm’s time *Gunderup stone 1* still stood on the mound mentioned in the inscription [8]. The mound is no longer there and, since it had previously been put to use as a potato clamp, an excavation by experts in 1898 produced no

- 306 Gunderup stone 1, North Jutland. 245 cm. Retouched photograph. – From the point of view of cultural history, this is one of the most interesting of Viking Age inscriptions. The stone was put up by a man in memory of his step-father and his mother who both “lie in this mound”. The step-father, a noble “thegn”, is said in the last line (on the right of the photograph) to have “granted” his property to the man making the memorial, i.e. made him his heir. But notice that this last line, much less neat and regular than the others, is made with only very shallow incisions – a sort of whisper of a line. Whether we should try to read something
195 into this is hard to tell – we find the same thing on Haddeby 4, where the carver’s formula is just lightly indicated. Perhaps neither inscription was fully finished? Or did the carver get tired and leave it to the paint-brush to make good?



results. The stone's interest lies not only in the inscription, but also in the fact that it may never have been finished. As on Haddeby 4, where the formula *kurmr raist run(ar)* on face C is only inscribed with light strokes, as if offering a guide for subsequent carving, so the last line on the Gunderup stone is also incised very lightly – the runes here are also larger than the rest and lack a frame-line. This last line announces that the dead man left his property to the man who made the monument – apparently his stepson – but was it ever finished? Is it

- 314 Års stone, North Jutland. 160 cm. Face B. Retouched photograph. – Set up by Asser in memory of his lord, Toke, and ending with a short stanza: The stone said here it will stand long; let it name Val-Toke's "cairn" (memorial mound) – technically proficient verse but a rather flat statement. One might think it more natural that the stone should name Val-Toke's fame rather than his cairn. The ornament is inferior. One would give a lot to know whether Val-Toke here is the same man as Hållestad's Toke Gormsson. But Toke was as common in the Viking Age as John or Michael is now.
- 306 Top right: the Asmild stone, North Jutland. 120 cm. Retouched photograph. – Contains one of our inscriptions most imbued with family feeling: put up by the lady, Thorgun, daughter of Thorgot, who was son of Thjodulv (all good Nordic names), in memory of her husband, Bose, a *tipita man* (*tipenda man*), a "tidings' man". A son-in-law of Jarl Håkon in Norway had the same term as a cognomen: *Tiðenda-Skopti*. Does it designate some office or function he had? Or did Bose have a "news-worthy" career?
- 313 Jetsmark stone, North Jutland. 120 cm. Retouched photograph. – Hove placed the stone in memory of his brothers, Thorlak and Ride. – A classic terse inscription – just the bare facts. It is left to the reader to imagine how two brothers might have died at the same time. – The rune form \sharp (a) and h preserved before r in *Hripi* suggest Norwegian influence.

Bottom right: the Mejlby stone, North Jutland. 140 cm. Retouched photograph. – Åne set up this stone in memory of his son, Eskil, who met death with Thore in Øresund. Then everybody knew who Thore was – whether Eskil's chieftain or comrade – and whether it was shipwreck or sea-battle that cost them their lives. We know nothing.



possibly an extra piece of information which for some reason was not included when the inscription was first undertaken? Or did the carver simply run out of steam and think to himself that painting the runes in would cover up for his idleness. He was not an outstanding craftsman, as the inscription shows.

*303 *Gunderup stone 1, North Jutland:*

: tuki : raisþi : stini : þaisi : auk : karþi : kub(l) [:] | : þausi :
aftaba : mak : sin : þaikn : kuþan : auk : || : tufu : muþur :
siną : þau : lika : bapi : i : þaum : hauki : | abi : uni : tuka :
fiar : sins : aft : sik :

Toke set up these stones and made this monument in memory of Abe (or Ebbe), his kinsman by marriage (stepfather), a noble “thegn”, and in memory of Tove, his mother. They both lie in this mound. Abe granted Toke his property after him (i.e. made him his heir).

There are several irregularities in the inscription. We have to decide for example whether stini þaisi is a mistake for stina þaisi (these stones) or for stain þansi (this stone) – the former is the simpler correction and seems therefore more likely. If Toke put up stones, then he must have arranged a stone setting to accompany the rune stone and the grave-mound, and together these made the whole monument, the *kumbl*.

The Asmild stone was found, somewhat the worse for wear, built into the masonry of the ancient monastery church of Asmild, close to Viborg. The fragments of it, of all shapes and sizes, show that the builders were more interested in it for their purposes than for any old writing it had on it – if, indeed, they ever gave so much as a thought to the runes. The inscription is carved very deeply and clearly:

*305 *Asmild stone, North Jutland:*

þurkutr | þurkus | | tutir | þiuþulfs | sunar [|] | sati | stin |
þasi | iftir | busa || uirsin | tiþita | man | muar | h? [ten runes
or so] | tutur |

Thorgun(d), Thorgot’s daughter, Thjodulv’s son, placed this stone in memory of Bose, her man (husband), “tidings’ man”...

Kleitrup stone, North Jutland. 165 cm. One of a pair of stones — the other is lost — set up beside a road, near the lake. The inscription says: and in memory of Åmund, his son's son. The beginning must have been on the other stone, which we have searched for high and low, early and late, here and round about — but in vain. Photo: Marie Stoklund and E. Moltke.



muar is genitive singular of mar, Old Norse *mær*, “maid”. The word can also signify wife and, to complicate matters, can also be a proper name (like Father and Brother). The last word tutur, “daughter”, can be any case except the nominative.

In the foregoing we have met examples of the virtues which the Scandinavians most prized: courage, loyalty to lord and comrades, hospitality. Now we meet their pride — family pride. The Asmild stone is a family stone, if ever there was one: three generations are enrolled in the inscription.

But what is a “tidings’ man”? Is it a title of one of those officials we have been searching for high and low — on a par with *landmaþr*, *bumaþr*, *bryti*? Or was he a man who made news — because something always happened when he turned up? The Norwegian runologist Gerd Høst [9] has pointed out that a son-in-law of Earl Hakon (also about 980), named Skopti Skagason, had the same addition as is found here on the Asmild stone and was called *Tiðenda-Skopti*. She wonders whether we may not justifiably assume that he was the earl’s “tidings’ man”, or perhaps, as she suggests, his *ráðgiafi*, “adviser”. On this attractive assumption we might see in Bose a king’s

counsellor or even his “Minister of Information”. But should we?

307 In 1978 an interesting stone was dug out of a field near *Kleitrup* lake in Viborg county and close to a prehistoric road [10]. It bore a surprising inscription:

: auk : ift : amunta × | : sunar : sun : sin ×

— and in memory of Åmunde, his son’s son.

Where is the beginning of the inscription? This stone never had another rune on it — so the beginning must have been cut on a different stone, and the pair of them presumably flanked the ancient track — or perhaps marked a ford. They then become a modest Danish parallel to Sweden’s famous *Jarlebanke stones* (at Täby, Uppland; Sven B.F. Jansson, *RunSverige*, p. 102). These were set up by a great landowner in his own life-time as a memorial to himself, and he built a causeway for the good of his soul, and — so the inscription adds — he alone owned the whole of Täby. God help his soul! The Kleitrup stone is a couple of generations older than Jarlebanke’s stones, probably contemporary with Sven Forkbeard’s Haddeby stones 1 and 3.

More than a score of Viking Age rune stones — not the smallest of them either — were put up by women, ladies of the grandest families: Asfrid Odinkar’s daughter for King Sigtryg (Haddeby 2 and 4), Tove Mistivoj’s daughter, wife of King Harald the Good Gormsson, for her mother (Sønder Vissing 1), Ragnhild Ulv’s sister for her first husband (Tryggevælde) and her second (Glavendrup), Åse for father (?) and husband (†Torup in Ty and Sjørind), Thjodvi for her husband (?) (Gørlev), Thorgun(d) Thorgot’s daughter for her husband (Asmild), and so on and on — more than twenty of them, stones and monuments in honour of father, husband, son, husband and stepson, nephew (Ålum 4), father-in-law. This tells us something about women’s independence and equality in Denmark in the Viking Age (a woman has the right to demand a divorce whenever she wishes, reported an astonished Arab, who visited Hedeby c. 960).

*194 *195

203

There are two queens among them (Haddeby and Sønder Vissing). They do not give themselves a title — as we saw above,

Klemensker stone 3, Bornholm. 270 cm. Retouched photograph. — Bornholm's most massive but not its tallest rune stone. The inscription is often referred to because it says it was put up by a man in memory of his father, brother, mother and sister — but only the male members of the family are named. The discussion in the text shows how little weight can be attached to this as evidence of sex discrimination.



310

drotning (modern *dronning*, “queen”) was used by subordinates of their lord's wife, their lady (cf. Læborg and Ravnkilde 1) — but they do give the names of father and husband.

228 378

People have wondered how (Queen) Tove could put up the Sønder Vissing stone in memory of her mother without actually naming her, while at the same time giving a precise account of her own ancestry and marriage. Since it is a woman setting up a stone in memory of another woman, there can be no question of discrimination on grounds of sex. We must rather regard the stone as another illustration of that common trait — abundantly clear in many inscriptions, above all on the great Jelling stone — according to which the real subject of the stone's proclamation is not the person commemorated but the

man or woman who erected it. Another example is the lost *Torup stone M*, North Jutland, which Asgot, Vide's son, Sven's kinsman (or partner), set up in memory of Broder.

*309 On *Klemensker stone 3*, Bornholm – the most massive though not the tallest rune stone on the island – we read:

× suenkir × lit × raisa × stein × þena × eftir × tosta ×₊ faþur
 × sin × auk × eftir × alflak × broþur × sin × auk × eftir ×
 moþur × sina × | × auk × eftir × systur | sina ×

Svenger had this stone set up in memory of Toste, his father, and in memory of Alvlak, his brother, and in memory of his mother and in memory of his sister.

Father and brother are here identified by name and family relationship (the father is given emphasis by the double division mark after his name), the women are merely referred to as mother and sister – no names. On the basis of this one instance (cf. also Rø), however, it is not wise to conclude (as we did in DaRun), that this typifies the ancient view of the status of the sexes within the family. The numerous Viking Age stones either raised by women alone or by women alongside their husbands are strong evidence against such a simplification, and it hardly seems likely that St Paul's views on female inferiority are here voiced on Bornholm rune stones. And when 190 *Rimsø*, set up by Thore, Einråde's brother, in memory of their unnamed mother, has been cited as evidence of male chauvinism, the final alliterating couplet has been ignored. It says, "Death of a mother is the worst that can happen to a son." – Could this possibly be disdain? [11].

There are also quite a few examples of the omission of men's names, when they are identified only in terms of their relationship to the dead, e.g. Flemløse, "sons", Glavendrup, 156 224 "Alle's sons"; cf. also the Karlevi stone. If the lost Allerup 320 329 stone is correctly interpreted in DaRun – NN placed the stone in memory of his father and his mother, Tonne – we have an example of mother named and father unnamed.

Women who commissioned stones and monuments most often announce themselves as the wives of named husbands, but on the lost *Stora Herrestad stone*, Skåne, we find another,



Svenstrup stone, North Jutland. 100 cm. Retouched photograph. — A recent discovery. It tells of death brought about by treachery or ambush: set up by a son or daughter in memory of his or her father, Asved, who — alas — met deceit with Ilde's sons. It is Denmark's second "treachery" inscription — the other was Vester Marie 5, Bornholm.

312

332

perhaps more deferential, mode of expression, using the verb *ega*, literally "to own, possess" in its ancient technical sense of "having (to wife), being married (to a woman)":

kitilau | lat | kaurua | kubl | þausi | af(ti)[R] ... þiakn | al |
kupan | þan | is | hana | ati

Kedelø had this monument made in memory of X, a very noble "thegn" who had her to wife ("owned her").

Vikings were fighting men. The Viking Age was an age of violence and warfare. This comes out in runic inscriptions too. When they state that a man *warþ døpr* — literally, "became dead" — they mean that he met a violent end, met death in battle: he met death when "drengs" besieged Hedeby (Had-

deby 1); – when kings fought (Århus 3); – with Thore in Øresund (Mejlby); he was slain (*wægin*) on . . .-heath (†Torup in Ty – the Sjelle stone also records death on a heath), or killed (*dræpin*) in the sea-fight off Udlænge (Ny Larsker 2).

Sometimes we are told that men lost their lives in foreign lands: in Sweden (Tirsted, Egtved), on Gotland (Sønder Kirkeby, Fuglie), or less specifically: in the east (Kolind), in the west (Uppåkra), in the north . . . on a Viking foray (Västra Strö): The men commemorated on the Gårdstånga stone were remembered as “drengs” who were “(widely famous?) on Viking forays”. The Slesvig stone announces that the dead man lies buried at a place called “Skia” in England; while in Valleberga Sven and Thorgot made a monument in memory of Manne and Svenne – God help their souls well – and they lie in London.

We know about 40 stones put up in memory of fathers (some ten of them on Bornholm); but if we count the stones put up by parents for sons (c. 15) and grandsons (1), by comrades for comrades (c. 15), and by brothers for brothers (c. 35), and reckon that most of these commemorate young men (14 are in memory of “drengs”), we get up to 60 to 70 instances of youthful mortality (with again some ten of them on Bornholm). Such numbers do not suggest peaceful death-bed scenes in the bosom of the family.

But it is not only sword, spear and arrow that can snatch a man's life. When the Helnæs stone records that the men drowned and when the Ny Larsker stone commemorates a father who “drowned . . . with all the crew”, we do not know whether it was hostility of storm or foe that sank their ships.

332 Death by treachery we meet on *Vester Marie stone 5*, Bornholm: “Skoge betrayed the innocent man”, and the recently discovered

*311 *Svenstrup stone*, North Jutland, says:

þurkuþr : risþi : stin : þānsi : iftir : aþuiþ : faþur : sin : hān :
uai : fan : arskab : | miþ : ilta : sunum

Thorgot (a man) or Thorgund (a woman) set up this stone in memory of Asved, his (her) father. He woefully met deceit with Ilde's sons [12].

Rønninge stone, Fyn.
 Only just over a metre tall. Retouched photograph. — Sote placed this stone in memory of his brother Elev, son of Asgot of the red shield. — Were the two men, Sote and Elev, not natural brothers? Were they perhaps guild-brethren? — Sote may be the man who first carved the runes on the Tryggevælde stone and then the long Glavendrup inscription. Sote then was in the service of Ragnhild (and her husbands) — just as the literate Erilar we meet in Primitive Norse inscriptions was the functionary of some great lord or lady.



314

Some at least of the simple inscriptions, that tell only who set up the stone and in whose memory, should doubtless be included among these memorials of sudden death. A pair like these, for example:

Øster Alling stone, North Jutland:

: þurir : rispi | : stin : þani : aftir | : fastulf : miuk(a)

Thore set up this stone in memory of Fastulv the supple,

and the *Jetsmark stone*, North Jutland:

hufi | sati | stin | ift | bruþr | sinapurlakauk | hripi

Hove placed the stone in memory of his brothers, Thorlak and Ride.

*305

We do not know how they died nor their position in the society of their day. For by no means all rune stones were erected by great people to honour their own kind. If the way the runes are formed is to be trusted, then the Sote who inscribed the Tryggevælde and Glavendrup stones – and was thus in service with Ragnhild and moved with her to Fyn on her second marriage – not only cut the runes on the Rønninge stone but was himself responsible for setting it up.

*313 *Rønninge stone*, Fyn:

suti | sati | stain | þansi | aft | ailaif | brupur | sin | sun askaus |
raupum | skialta

Sote placed this stone in memory of Elev, his brother, son of Asgot of the red shield.

Given that Sote here was the same man as the carver of Tryggevælde and Glavendrup, the Rønninge stone becomes our oldest example of a memorial raised by a servant or subordinate.

228 Later there is no shortage of such stones. There is *Læborg* set
228 up by Ravnunge-Tue in honour of his lady, and *Bække 1* on
which he and two other men – with names which do not belong in the upper echelons of society – proclaim that they
298 made Thyre's mound. An overseer made the *Randbøl* stone
277 in memory of his wife, and Toste, Asvid's smith, set up *Kolind*
378 to commemorate his brother. The *Ravnskilde* stone was set up
by Asser the factor, while the unnamed sons of Østen placed
293 *Tågerup* in memory of their brother, a member of Esbern
Neb's ship's company. *Hällestad* was raised by "drenge" to
honour their lord killed in battle. A lord (*drottin*) is also
remembered on the Års stone, with an inscription partly in
verse. Is this a Jutish counterpart to the Scanian memorial?

*305 *Års stone*, North Jutland:

: asur : sati : stin : þansi : aft : ual : tuka : trutin : | × sin ||
× stin : kuask : hirs : stanta laki : sar : ual : tuka × | × uarþa :
nafni

Asser placed this stone in memory of Val-Toke, his lord. The stone says that here it will stand for a long time. It shall name Val-Toke's "cairn" (memorial mound).

Hörning stone, North Jutland. 160 cm. Retouched photograph. — Denmark was full of slaves in the Viking Age; but the Hörning stone is our only demonstrable “slave” stone — understandably, for one could not expect much active participation in the rune-stone custom by members of this class of society. Toke the smith put this stone up in memory of Thorgisl Gudmundsson, who gave him “gold and freedom”. We understand Thorgisl’s action better when we observe the cross on the stone. Both master and slave (who must have been a skilful and loyal craftsman) were Christians. The Grensten stone was also put up by Toke the smith — and he doubtless carved the inscription himself, with its good Christian prayer at the end.



316

316

Asser and the Scanian “drengs” served great men, but they were hardly humble folk themselves — some may even have been retainers of Denmark’s king.

Do runic inscriptions also tell of slaves? We know from more or less murky sources that slaves were an essential element in Viking Age society, but we have only one rune stone that speaks of a slave — and he was no longer a slave but a freedman. He could afford not only to set up a stone in memory of the master who had set him free but also another in honour of a man whose relationship to him we do not know.

He doubtless carved the stones himself. He was a Christian and no doubt his master was too.

*315 *Horning stone*, North Jutland:

tuki : smiþr : riþ : stin : ift | þurkisl : kuþmutar : sun : is :
hanum | kaf : kul : uk : frialsi

Toke the smith set up the stone in memory of Thorgisl, Gudmund's son, who gave him gold (?) and freedom (or less probably: proclaimed him a member of the family and free).

Grensten stone, North Jutland:

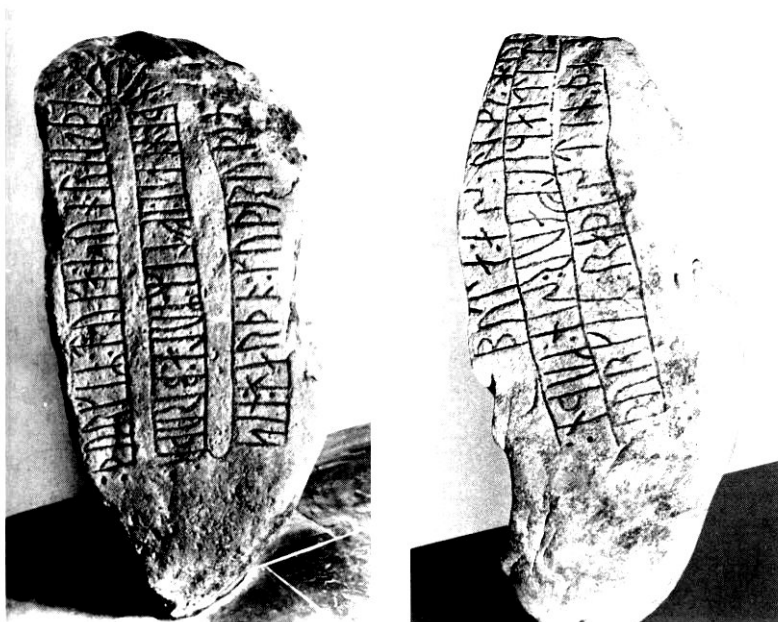
| tuki | smiþr | risþ × | | stin | þisi | aiftir | | | rifla | sun | askis
| bianar | | sunar | kuþ | hiab | þara | | salu |

Toke the smith set up this stone in memory of Revle, son of Esge, son of Bjørn. God help their souls.

Toke may have been a good craftsman and a good Christian – but he was not, it appears, an impeccable speller: riþ and risþ for risþi (though maybe they represent an up-to-date form), rifla for rifla (but doubtless because of the preceding R), bianar for biarnar (but possibly for phonetic reasons).

The two inscriptions are textbook examples of the caution one must exercise in offering more precise dates for rune stones. Toke uses the old form *æs* (not *æR*) for the relative; on the one stone he uses the Jelling-type short form *ift*, on the other the post-Jelling long form *aiftir*. But both stones are presumably to be dated to quite some time after AD 1000.

Toke the smith's spelling brings us to the question of who composed the inscriptions: the rune-carvers or the people who commissioned them? And how far were these identical? We cannot give firm answers, but we can probably accept it as a working rule that great men seldom (if at all) and great ladies never undertook the work of carving. It is likely on the other hand that they had their say in what the inscription should contain. They left the composition and drafting to the expert (the *erilar* of the time), either in their household or in their locality, and he then painted or chalked the runes for the carver to follow, either on a piece of wood or actually on the stone selected for the monument. The carver often signs his name –



Asferg stone, North Jutland. 150 cm. Retouched photograph. — The work of a stone-mason who was hardly literate — but he managed his runes better than the Dalby bungler. 318

On the right: the Dalby stone, Skåne. 115 cm. Retouched photograph. — Many rune-carvers were capable enough with hammer and chisel, but they were not always literate. The Dalby mason was one of that kind. 318

earliest on the Helnæs and Flemløse stones with “Åver painted” (preserving the old expression *fapi*, which originally referred to painting the runes to be copied — but cf. the caption on p. 154). We met a rune-carver named Gorm on Haddeby 4, and there are many others. 156

We have also met inscriptions which I have described as the work of bunglers, masons who were not familiar with runes and runic spelling and perhaps did not even comprehend what the runes stood for. The same was true of many of the carvers who produced sculptures and tombstones in the romanesque period. They were often illiterate — we shall meet examples when we come to the medieval gravestones with runes on them at Bregninge and Gesing. Tirsted is a fine, handsomely decorated 415 410

ed stone but, as we saw, it was carved by a man who was decidedly not at home with runic spelling. Another five or six carvers of the same kind could be mentioned.

*317 *Dalby stone, Skåne:*

þurkir : raþi : stin : þan . . | at : itinkil : faur : sin : kuþn : |
buta : as : liki : hu(k) . .

One might guess that the draft the carver was supposed to follow looked like this:

þurkir : raisþi : stin : þansi | a(f)t stinkil : faþur sin : kuþan :
buta : as (or is) . . .

Thorger set up this stone in memory of Stenkel, his father, a “good” householder, who lies in the mound (?) — the end is totally confused.

*317 *Asferg stone, North Jutland:*

: þurgir : tuka : sun : risþi : stin : þannsi : iftir : mula : brupr
: | sin : harþa : kuþru : þin :

Thorger Toke’s son set up this stone in memory of Mule, his brother, a very noble “thegn”.

þannsi for þansi, brupr for brupur, harþa for harpa — and with the carver going to pieces completely at the end — kuþru : þin : for kuþan : þikn :

Three Bornholm stones have fared badly at the hands of bunglers, *Øster Marie 5* and *6* and *Øster Lars 1*, which reads:
þukil : rit : itin : auti : buþu : þku : sun : hui : sna

From this double-dutch only the first four words can be “re-constructed”:

þukil (or þurkíl) : riti : stin : auft (?) . . . sun . . . — Thykil (Thorkil) set up the stone after . . . son . . .

*319 The old *Vordingborg stone*, with a type of formula which would put it in the transitional period, may also be one of our “blundered” inscriptions:

karþipiaupuir^u || aftaþisl(u)marutrkaú

Made Thjodver (or Thjodvi) after Adils ???

Vordingborg stone, Sjælland. 145 cm. Retouched photograph. — The runes are cut in an extraordinary half-hearted fashion — þ in apisl looks most like a big roman P and there is no difference to be seen between u-runes and r-runes. And is it linguistically sound? Perhaps this venerable stone (like the Tirsted stone) should be counted among the “blundered” stones?



Perhaps it is the runologists who are not clever enough.

Incidentally, we should also notice that some writers used curiously contracted spellings. We meet them on Bornholm stones, for example, and they are still more frequent in Sweden.

The Bornholm *Rø* stone reads like this:

...(f)þu : sin : uk : muþ : sina — in memory of NN his father and his mother.

Øster Marie stone 6 (cf. Sørup), also on Bornholm, is quite incomprehensible. 411 257

There are many other interesting rune stones from the Viking Age but we must leave them to the “table of inscriptions”. There are three, however, – as it happens, all sited far from Denmark – which we cannot omit here. One is on Swedish Öland, the other two are in England.

*321 *Karlevi stone, Öland:*

+ stain : sasi : ias · satr · aiftir · siba | ... · kupa · sun · fultars ·
inhans | lipi · sati · at · u · tausaiþ ... | fulkin : likr : hins :
fulkþu : flaistr : | uisi : þat · maistar · taiþir : tulka | þrupar :
traukr : i : þaimsi · huki : | munat : raiþ · uiþur : rāpa : ruk :
starkr | i [:] tanmarku : a(i)ntils : iarmun · | kruntar : urkraṇtari
: lanti

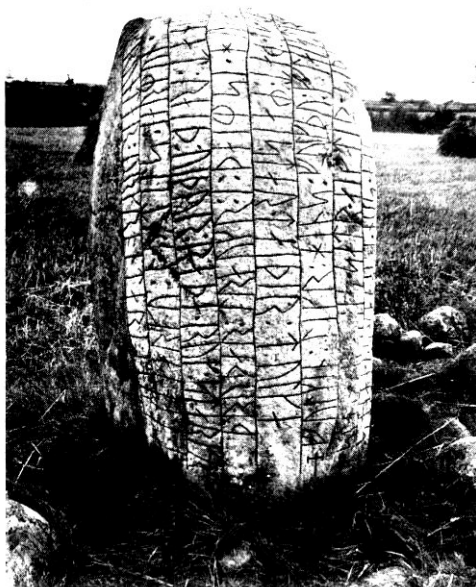
The other side of the stone has carved: ... NINONI | ... EH +
This stone is placed in memory of Sibbe the good, son of Foldar. And his follower placed on the island this (memorial) of death. Hidden lies he whom – most knew it – the greatest virtues accompanied, tree of the goddess of battle (i.e. the warrior), in this mound. No strife-strong chariot-god of wondrous wide ground of sea-king (i.e. no god of the ship, no captain) will rule more uprightly land in Denmark.

The last part of the inscription, the tribute to the dead commander, is a stanza in the verse form called *dróttkvætt*, with elaborate kennings, well known from the scaldic poetry of Norway and Iceland. In normalised form:

Folginn liggr hinn's fylgju
– flestr vissi þat – mestar
dæþir dolga þrúpar
draugr í þeimsi haugi.
Mun-at reiþ-Viþurr rápa
rógstarkr i Danmqrku
Endils i qrmungrundar
orgrandari landi.

The language shows that the inscription was composed by a Norwegian or an Icelander [13], but apart from one (þ n, alongside þ), the runes are Danish. The roman capitals on the

Karlevi stone, Öland.
 Grey sandstone. 140 cm.
 Retouched photographs.
 – On a Viking expedition along the Baltic coast of Sweden Sibbe Foldar's son – whom the greatest prowess accompanied, the tree of the valkyrie, who ruled over land in Denmark – met his death – from wounds or sickness we do not know. His follower (who does not give his name) raised the memorial on the island (i.e. Öland), on the southernmost point. Sibbe had someone on board who knew Latin letters (see the lower picture). The author of the inscription (who was perhaps the carver too) was an Ic-lander or a Norwegian, as the language and verse form show.



other side are, as far as one can judge, contemporary with the runic inscription; they may have rendered a Latin word or words. The memorial inscription begins with a cross, while the stanza is introduced by a T-shaped sign on its side which, precisely because it is horizontal, cannot be interpreted as a tau-cross, but could be a stylised hammer symbol, Thor's hammer (?). The same two symbols, cross and hammer (?), are found in association with the roman letters on the other side of the stone. Does this mean that the monument (like
 223 other Viking Age stones, cf. *Heathen and Christian*) was safeguarded by symbols from both religions – to be absolutely on the safe side? And do the roman letters mean that a monk or cleric was on the expedition too? If the stone were purely Danish, it would be counted contemporary with the Bornholm stones because of the r-rune (not R) in e.g. aiftir – but here this must be seen as a West Norse feature. It may be as old as Sven Forkbeard's Haddeby stones 1 and 3, or it may be a generation younger, from c. 1000.

From this Danish rune stone in the Baltic we may turn to two that survive across the North Sea in two of the capital cities of Anglo-Saxon England, Winchester and London.

*323 *Winchester stone* was discovered in 1970 embedded in the medieval tower of St Maurice's church. It is only a fragment, the middle part of two (vertical) lines of runes which R.I. Page reads thus [14]:

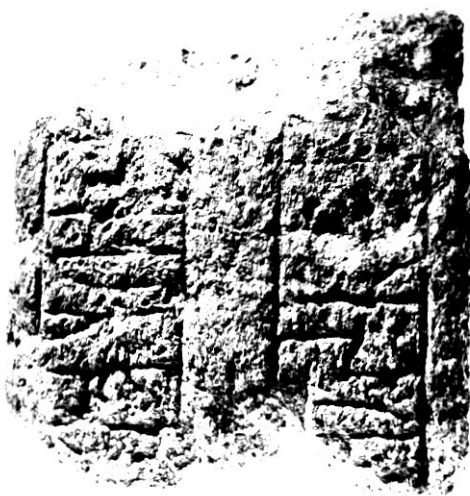
(i) – (R) : auk(a)l : ? – – ? usk?? i.e. after Aukæl ... huskalr(?)

207 299 The a-rune for æ in the name Aukæl can be compared with its use in saŕ on Jelling stone 2 and in suǫþiaupu on the Tirsted stone. It was interesting and surprising to learn that traces of red paint were preserved in the runes.

*325 *London stone*, found in the churchyard of St Paul's cathedral, takes us into a different environment altogether from that of the Karlevi Viking stone. Or does it? Let us first read the inscription, which is only a part – maybe a very small part – of the original:

(ki)na : let : lekia : st | in : þensi : auk : tuki :
 Ginna and Toke had this stone laid.

The stone laid by these two must have been the flat tombstone (the ledger) at one end of which our surviving stone stood as an upright gable. Another gable stone at the other end would have recorded the name of the man whose tomb it was. If the ledger had a flat upper surface, it too might have had an inscription, possibly of some length and probably of a pious nature – perhaps calling on the passer-by to pray for the dead man’s soul. If it was fashioned like a sarcophagus, on the other hand, possibly saddle-roofed or rounded like the well-known English “hog-back” tombs, it would not necessarily have had an inscription. The preserved stone carries a spirited picture of the “great beast” – presumably to be interpreted as a symbol of evil or the Evil One, as it certainly is on the Jelling stone. In that case we might expect the other gable stone to have balanced it with a picture symbolising righteousness – perhaps, as at Jelling, a picture of Christ himself.



Winchester stone, Hampshire, England. 15 × 17.5 cm. Viking Age Danish runes, thought to be from the time when Knut the Great (died 1035) ruled England (and Denmark). The battered fragment was excavated in 1970 during alterations to the tower of St Maurice’s in Winchester. Of special interest is the fact that “traces of a red paint filled the rune and framing line incisions” (R.I. Page). Photo: Robert K. Vincent, jr. From the *Antiquaries’ Journal*, 1975.

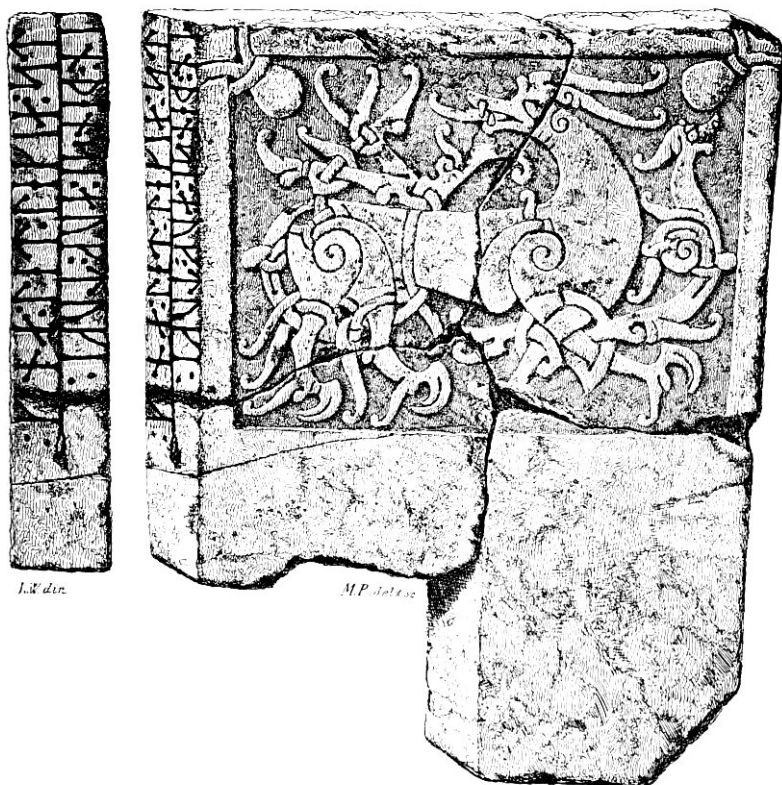
322

It is not so easy to date the stone on runological grounds, for we know very little about the use and development of runes in England – apart from those on the stone crosses in the Isle of Man. If the stone had stood in Denmark, it would be dated with the Bornholm stones, i.e. after 1050. But judging by the “great beast”, this is undoubtedly too late: 1025 ± 25 years is probably about right.

Like the Winchester stone, the London stone is a rarity among Danish runic monuments because it preserves traces of the colouring which must originally have been used to pick out the design and lettering on every rune stone. The colours remained on the London stone partly because it was quite soon buried underground and partly because the limestone of which it is made absorbs pigment better than granite does. In the first account of the stone in December 1852 James T. Knowles reported: “The faces of the sculpture have been coloured with a uniform deep tone of an almost black blue, still very perceptible in the original.” – A reconstruction of the colouring is given in an illustrated article by David M. Wilson in *Skalk* 1974, nr 5 [15].

NOTES

- 1 S.B.F. Jansson, *RunSverige*, p. 84: on a Sävsjö stone (Småland) a man called Vråe is titled *stallari Hákonar iarls*, marshall of Earl Hákon – the chief man in the *hirþ*. Hákon in this case was probably the Norwegian nephew and ally of Knud the Great who was drowned in 1029.
- 2 The singular *lipi*, follower, seems strange – one would have expected something like the “drengs” of the Hällestad stone.
- 3 Harry Andersen has returned several times to this difficult problem, cf. *Acta Philologica Scandinavica* 1961, pp. 1ff.
- 4 *ÅrbOldk.* 1945, pp. 120 ff. Cf. K. Düwel’s analysis in *Abhandl. der Akad. der Wiss. in Göttingen. Phil.-Hist. Klasse, III. Folge*, nr 89, 1975, p. 188.
- 5 Cf. K.G. Ljunggren, *Landman och boman i vikingatida källor*, *Arkiv f. nord. Fil.* 74, 1959, pp. 115 ff.
- 6 Cf. the versified conclusion of the Tübingen inscription (Södermanland): *bruþr uarU þar bistra mana : a : lanti auk : i lipi : uti : hiltu sini huskarla : ui[l] + han + fial + i + urusti + austr + i + garþum + lis + furugi + lanmana + bestr, Broþr varu þæir | bæstra manna |*



London stone, England (sometimes called the St Paul's stone). The gable stone of a tomb. From Wimmer, DRM. Limestone, just under 60 cm wide, stood about 50 cm above the ledger stone. — Ginne had this stone laid, and Toke. The stone they refer to is the horizontal tombstone, on which and on the matching (lost) gable stone at the other end would have been inscribed the dead man's name and probably some prayer for his soul. The "great beast" with the snake is certainly to be interpreted in the same way as the corresponding motif on the Jelling stone. It follows therefore that the other gable stone must have pictured its antithesis — a Christian symbol of grace and power. In ornamental terms the beast is a younger edition of the Jelling monster and it is also stylistically younger than the Hunnestad and Tullstorp beasts, characterised, as can be seen, by the many "loose" ends, the profusion of interlacing and overlapping lines, and the acanthus foliage with its little side-shoot. Århus 5 (DaRun 6) is probably the Danish stone that comes nearest to this one from St Paul's, but there can easily be a generation between them.

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a landi | ok i lípi uti | heldu sína | huskarla vel | hann fíall i orrustu | austr i Garþum | líps forungi | landmanna bæstr, The brothers were best among men on land and out in the levy. They held their housemen well. He fell in action east in Gardaríke, the levy's captain, noblest of "land-men" (S.B.F. Jansson: *RunSverige*, p. 61).

- 7 The stones at Västra Väppeby and Gådi (Uppland) and Ivla (Småland); cf. S.B.F. Jansson, *RunSverige*, p. 127.
- 8 One or two of the things said about this stone in *DaRun* show that the editors were dozing at the time.
- 9 *NoTSpr.* 1952, p. 336. The proposed reconstruction of the end of the inscription assumes preservation of *h* before *r* and must consequently be dismissed. — Further bibliography in K.M. Nielsen, *FestskrLis Jacobsen*, 1952, pp. 19 ff.; his reconstruction presupposes carving errors.
- 10 See *Skalk* 1978, nr 4; *MIV* (*Museerne i Viborg amt*) 8, 1978, p. 56 f.
- 11 See the article "rejsere og afdøde" in *DaRun*. — On the position of women in the Migration Age see the Norwegian *Rosseland* inscription and note.
- 12 In *Danske runeindskrifter*, 1983, pp. 174ff. Niels Åge Nielsen interprets: *Han 'we' fann / argskap mæþ 'Ilda' sunum*. He supposes *uai* to be archaic writing and reads the saying as an (irregular) stanza in *ljóðahátt*.
- 13 Magnus Olsen's attempt to prove that the *Karlevi* stanza was composed by the Icelandic poet, Vigfús Víga-Glúmsson, must be counted one of his delightful fantasies (see *Avhandl. utg. av Det Norske Videnskaps-Akademi i Oslo*, II. Hist.-Filos. Klasse 1956, no. 1, 1957). — S.B.F. Jansson, *RunSverige*, p. 136, prefers to translate *draugr* as "doer" or "executor" of the goddess of battles — which is also etymologically possible.
- 14 Birthe Kjolbye-Biddle and R.I. Page, *The Antiquaries Journal* LV, Part II, 1975, pp. 389 ff.
- 15 The body of the animal is reproduced black in Wilson's version because that is how it appeared when he fetched out the colours by wetting the stone. But we must prefer the first description and take it that the black is decomposed blue.



Øster Marie stone 1 (earlier known as the Gyldenså stone), Bornholm. 300 cm. Retouched photograph. — bufi · lit · risa · aftir · aukil · fapur · sin · kupa(n) · kristr · ialbi · sialu. Photographed by Anders Bæksted in 1931. The author is standing by the stone with a “justofot”, an extremely primitive light-metre but the last word at the time. For this picture the exposure was probably 1/25 second (the fastest the shutter would do) and aperture 36; speed today would be about 1/100 second.

BORNHOLM

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Bornholm is some distance from Denmark and closer to Sweden. Its runes are too. Inscriptions from the island have already been mentioned (e.g. Klemensker 3 and Rø), and it was probably noticed at once that the language and the lay-out – with the runes in bands and snakes – were very different from the common run of Danish stones. Runes came late to Bornholm – indeed, after people had stopped putting up rune stones altogether in the rest of Denmark. Denmark itself was late in acquiring the rune-stone habit – it only came with the Viking Age, centuries later than in Norway and Sweden – but the people of Bornholm seem to have adopted runes only when they adopted Christianity – and their general conversion is ascribed to a bishop of Lund as late as c. 1060. Not all rune stones on Bornholm are “Christian”, it is true – i.e. they do not all have Christian symbols or formulae – but a survey of the total stock on the island shows there is no great difference in age between the stones that display their Christianity and those that do not.

It was not people from Skåne or Blekinge who brought the art of runic writing to Bornholm, for the snake ornamentation on the stones of the island has remoter origins. We have to go deeper into Sweden to find them, especially to Södermanland and Östergötland. Its geographical situation made Bornholm a nodal point for trade and sea-traffic in the Baltic, so people who knew runes – from Gotland, Öland, Uppland and elsewhere – might easily find their way to the island. And that they certainly did. Swedes not only taught the islanders how to write runes, they also put up stones of their own among them (Bodilsker 5).

Obviously, if people on Bornholm did not learn to make runic monuments until a generation or so after other Danes had stopped putting up rune stones, differences in spelling, rune forms and decoration are to be expected.

Personal names on Bornholm rune stones point straight to Sweden. So do the snake ornamentation, the large decorative crosses (e.g. Øster Marie stone 3), and the final prayer in this pious form: God and God’s mother help his soul – frequent on

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Swedish rune stones, unknown in Denmark. The use of both ᚠ and ᚡ, ᚢ and ᚣ as the a- and n-rune respectively is a sign of Swedish influence, and alternation between Danish and stut-rune s (ᚱ and ᚲ) is common.

The lateness of the Bornholm inscriptions is especially evident in their use of ᚢ as an o-rune. In Denmark this rune was used for nasalised a, and it is never used for o in a Danish Viking Age inscription. Even the youngest stones on Danish territory outside Bornholm show no more than four examples of this ᚢ as an o-rune. They are Simris 1, Skåne – purely Swedish, carved by someone from Uppland; Tillitse on Lolland – carved by the man who put up the stone, and he was certainly under Swedish influence; †Hobro 1 in North Jutland and †Allerup on Fyn, both lost and perhaps neither of them purely Danish.

There is much exciting material in the inscriptions of this rocky island and there are many shapely and well-designed stones. We know about 30 which are completely or largely preserved and a number of smaller fragments; a few are known only from drawings. Altogether it makes a sizeable collection for an island no larger than Bornholm (587 km²). The carving ranges from the simplest of inscriptions either without frame-lines or other adornment (Øster Marie 4) or with just a frame (Klemensker 5) or a simple, curved frame-band (Klemensker 2), to skilful and imposing designs, with Vester Marie 5 and the other stones carved by this master as probably the most beautifully proportioned, though we must not forget the handsome Klemensker 3, mentioned above, or the tall Klemensker 1, an “obelisk” with writing and ornament on all its four sides.

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*309 338

Øster Marie stone 4. The inscription says, very simply:

*330

buᚲi · aukaliᚲ · stain · at · þukil ·

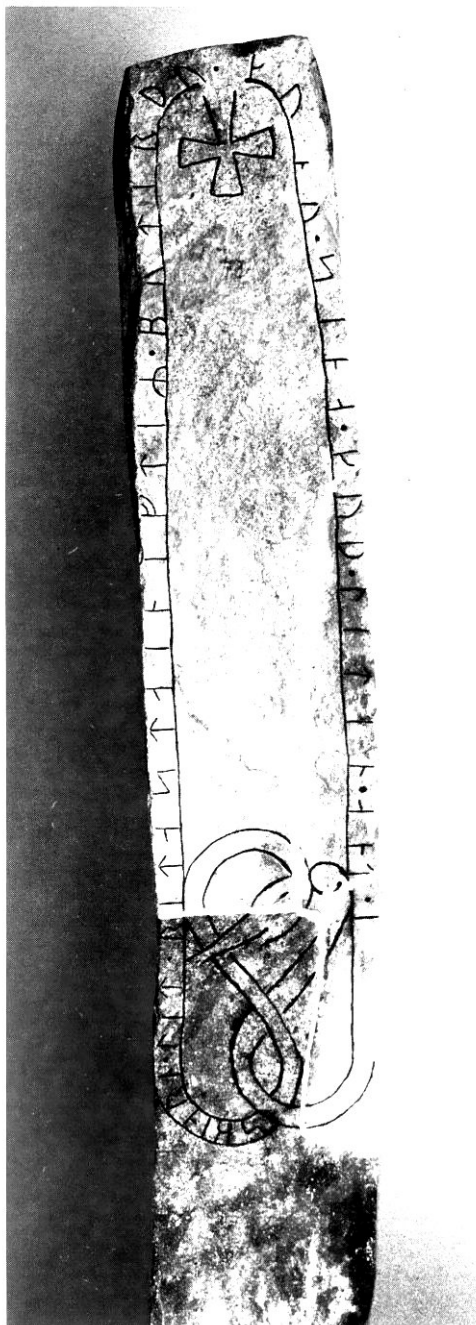
Bove had the stone hewn in memory of Thykil.

We have met difficulty with initial h before (auka = *hogga*), on the Sjørup stone in Skåne and the Sønder Kirkeby stone on Falster (which is closely related to Scanian rune stones).



Øster Marie stone 4, Bornholm. 225 cm. Retouched photograph. — bufi auka lit stain at pukil, Bove had the stone hewn in memory of Thykil. Note the verb *hogga* spelt auka, without initial h; the carvers of several Scanian stones drop their aitches too.

Bodilsker stone 5, Bornholm. 370 cm., the tallest rune stone on the island. Retouched photograph. Esbern had the stone set up in memory of Botirda, his wife. God relieve her spirit eternally. A Bornholm stone but language, runes and ornament all show that the carver was Swedish.



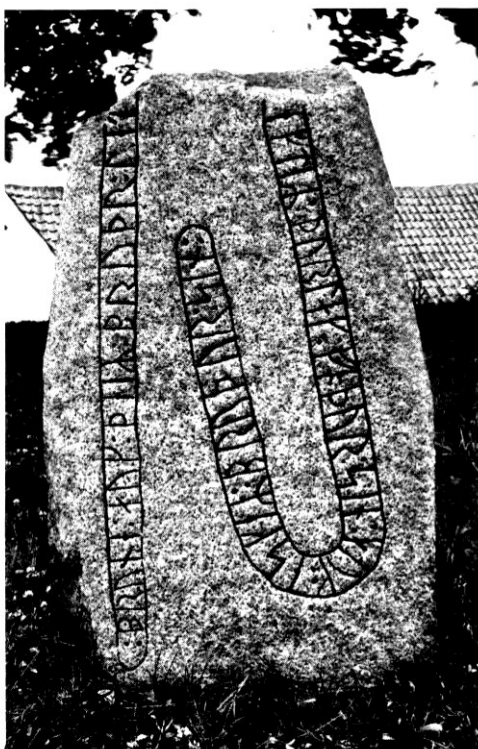
Klemensker stone 5:

suin : auk : ketil : reistu : sten : eftir : (i)u(l)k | ir : faður · sin
Sven and Ketil set up the stone in memory of Julger (?), their father.

*335 *Vester Marie stone 5:*

: asualdi : risti : stein : pinsa : iftr : alfar : brupur : sin : drinr :
kopr | : trebinu : syni : auk : skogi : suek : saklausan :
Asvalde set up this stone in memory of Alver, his brother. A noble “drengr” killed shamefully, and Skoge betrayed him innocent.

Several interpretations of this inscription have been offered. The one given is the most likely, even though it remains surprising that the initial u of *usyni*, “shamefully”, is joined to trebin and parted by a dividing mark from the word it properly



Klemensker stone 2, Bornholm. 110 cm (the top is missing). Retouched photograph. — : brune : auk : þeir : brupr : let ... eftir : þurlak : foður : sin : auk : eskir : brupur : sin : — Brune and his brothers had [the stone set up] in memory of Thorlak, their father, and Esge, their brother. Wimmer thought this stone (the Kongevej stone, as it was called earlier) was the oldest rune stone on Bornholm, but he was certainly mistaken. It is impossible to make any chronological differentiation between Bornholm stones with Christian formulae and those without.

Vester Marie stone 2, Bornholm. Sandstone. 190 cm. Retouched photograph. — Runic writing like this without frame-lines is known from Swedish rune stones, and the preposition form *abtir* is also a Swedish feature. The stone was set up by Thorsten and Sven in memory of Alvin their father and Thorlak their brother. The inscription ends with a prayer which the classic carver of Uppland, Åsmund Kåreson, particularly favoured: God and God's mother help their spirits.



belongs to — otherwise the writer uses division marks quite normally. This feature can be paralleled, however, e.g. on the Ås stone in Västergötland (which matches Hobro stone 2 in Jutland) and the Børglum column base may be mentioned as an example from the middle ages — Period 3, to which the Bornholm stones mark the transition. It is not easy to decide whether the adjective *kopr* — good, noble — refers to Alver's character or to his birth. Almost all the spellings are late (*risti*, *stein*, *drinr*), with a conservative *ʀ* in *iftr* but *r* in *drinr* (where final *ʀ* would have been more consistent). It is worth noting that each of the three Bornholm stones so far cited has its

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own spelling for the word “stone”: stain, stein, sten. The stein spelling is characteristic of the second half of the eleventh century – but anyone who thinks it denotes diphthongal pronunciation must think again. It is merely an orthographic form, from which we can infer nothing about the vocalism. Later on we shall meet a runic coin on which the moneyer signs himself suein in runes but SVEN in roman – and no doubt he was called the latter.

The master-carver of Vester Marie 5 also made the Nyker stone (which has the same ornament) and probably Ny Larsker 1 and 2. Attribution of (†)Åker 3 to him is less certain. The first three of these inscriptions are worth comparing with Vester Marie 5.

*262 *Nyker stone:*

· lo[4 runes](e)t · resa · sten [·] þensa · eftir · suen · sun · sin :
trenkr · alkoþar [6–7 runes] una(u)i | ok | hans · (b)r(oþu)r
· krist · h | elgi | hal(bi) · siolu · þera | · bryþra · be(g)ia ·

Lo... had this stone set up in memory of Sven, his son. The very noble “dreng” (met his death in some way or other). And (in memory of) his brother. Holy Christ help the souls of both those brothers.

One wonders why only one of the brothers is a “very noble dreng” and why the other is not named – was he just a fledgling?

*336 *Ny Larsker stone 1:*

sasur · lit · resa · sten · eftir · aluarþ · faþur · sin · truknaþi ·
han · uti · meþ · ala · skibara · etki · i · kristr · hab(i) | siolu |
has | sten · þesi · stai | eftir

332 Vester Marie stone 5, Bornholm. 210 cm. Retouched photograph. – One of Bornholm’s handsomest and best proportioned inscriptions, with Swedish snake ornament. Compared to the classic snakes of Swedish stones, this one is a degenerate specimen with neither snout-tip nor neck-point. To make up, it is furnished with a sharp claw. The inscription, made for a brother by a brother, ends with a reference to the shameful death for the good “dreng” through the treachery of Skoge;

*311 cf. the Svenstrup stone, North Jutland.





Ny Larsker stone 1, Bornholm. Sandstone. 260 cm. — Raised by Sasser in memory of his father who was drowned “far out” with all his crew. The inscription ends with a prayer for his soul and is then completed — reminding us of much older rune stones — with *sten þesi stai eftir* — may this stone stand in memory, — The same carver also made Ny Larsker 2.

Sasser had the stone set up in memory of Alvard (Halvard), his father. He drowned at sea (abroad?) with all the crew. Christ help his soul eternally (?). May this stone stand in memory.

*337 *Ny Larsker stone 2:*

kobu : suain : raisti : stain : þ^eina : a(f)tir : bausa : sun : sin :
tr(i) [c. 5 runes]n : þan : is : tribin : ua(r)þ : i : (ur)ostu : at
: ut : la(n)kiu : kuþ : tr(u)tin : hi(a)lbi : hans : ont : auk : sata :
mikial :



Ny Larsker stone 2, Bornholm. Sandstone. 185 cm. Retouched photograph. — By the same carver as Ny Larsker 1. A “historical” stone but with reference to an event we know from no other source. It was put up by Sven of the hooded cloak in memory of his son, who was killed in a battle off Udlænge (Utlängen), an island off the coast of Blekinge. Lord God and Saint Michael help his soul. The curious arrangement of the writing can be paralleled on Swedish stones, e.g. the rather older Fresta stone in Uppland (S.B.F. Jansson, *RunSverige*, fig. 40), which also has a “propeller” cross like Øster Marie 3.

336

Sven of the hooded cloak (?) set up this stone in memory of Bøse, his son, a ... “dreng” who was killed in battle at Utlängen. Lord God and Saint Michael help his soul.

Utlängan is the southeasternmost of the Blekinge islands. There is no other record of a battle there but since the inscription calls it an *orrosta*, it was probably a proper naval engagement, not just a casual encounter. As Wimmer suggested, Sven of the hooded cloak – *Kápu-Sveinn* – might well be a descendant of one of the notorious Jomsborg Vikings called Sigurd hooded-cloak – *Sigurðr kápa*. *Jómsvíkinga saga* tells that after the defeat of the Jomsborg Vikings in west Norway c. 986 Sigurd returned to Denmark and settled down on his ancestral property on Bornholm.

- *333 The inscription on *Vester Marie stone 2* is disposed on a curved band without frame-lines:

þurstin × uk [×] suin × raistu × abtir × alfuin × faþursin ×
 ukabtir × þurlak × b(r)uþu(r)sin × kuþhialbiant × þaira ×
 uk[u]þ(s)muþir

Thorsten and Sven set up (the stone) in memory of Alvin, their father, and in memory of Thorlak, their brother. God and God's mother help their spirits.

The form *abtir* might indicate that a Swede was involved in the drafting or possibly the carving of this inscription.

- *340 *Klemensker stone 1*, Bornholm's second tallest:

(kun)iltr : l(e)t : r(e)isa : st(e)n : þ(e)n(sa) : ef || tir : auþbiarn :
 bonta : sin : kristr : || hialbi : siolu : auþbiarnar : ilus : auk :
 bratis

kristr : hialbi : siolu (auþ) || biarnar : auk : ku[niltar] || : auk
 santa mikel : ilius : auk : baratis

Gunild had this stone set up in memory of Ødbjørn, her husband. Christ help Ødbjørn's soul into light and paradise.

Christ and Saint Michael help the souls of Ødbjørn and Gunild into light and paradise.

Before concluding this section on Bornholm, we should just mention *Klemensker 6*, not because it is particularly distinguished in language or decoration – it has a cross with one of

those disguised swastikas in the centre that were discussed above – but because – well, you may see for yourself:

Klemensker stone 6 (now in four fragments):

...(r)ais(t)[i] : stin : þ[i]nsi : aiftir : suin brupur : sin : ku...
(b)i : si(l) ... auk : kus : mupir : || ...(k)il : rist : runar : þisi :
auk : sueni :

NN set up this stone in memory of Sven, his brother. God and God's mother (help his) soul . . . kil and Svenne carved these runes.

Two carvers! Did they carve a side apiece, or what? The medieval Bregninge stone may give the answer.

415

Klemensker 7 also deserves a mention, because it has an archbishop in the inscription. The mere fact might seem enough to identify him but the inscription as it stands is incomprehensible, even though a large part of it, perhaps most of it, is preserved. We cannot even decide whether † stands for æ or a or whether the stone stood upright or lay flat. If † = æ (and it probably does), the stone belongs to Period 3, the Middle Ages. Was it a boundary stone?

*342

If we now look back over the Bornholm material, the stones are bound to appear as representative of a transition – the shift from the Viking Age to the medieval period. They went on putting up rune stones, many of them doubtless outside the churchyard walls but others again on the hallowed ground of “God's acre” itself. But the spelling shows a state of rapidly advancing decay. The Bornholm inscriptions make an excellent parallel to the late Primitive Norse inscriptions of Blekinge, the Stentofthen-Björketorp group, which similarly showed the *written* language of the time (to be kept strictly apart from the *spoken* language, of which we know very little) to be in a state of chaotic disintegration – or development. New runes, new linguistic forms, new spellings and attempts at spelling. Transitional periods are always the experimentalists' playtime.

137

If, for example, we take Øster Marie 4, we find it has the “received” spelling stain, while the next stone, *Klemensker 5*, has ei and t in reistu (for earlier raisþu). And “stone” is spelt sten (cf. above). Alongside these “novelties” we find R (not r)

332



Klemensker stone 1, Bornholm. 275 cm. Retouched photographs. – Set up by a grand and pious lady, Gunild, in memory of her husband, Ødbjørn, with prayers to Christ and St Michael to guide them both into light and paradise. The inscription sequence and the formulae are types known on Swedish stones.

Face A-B

in eftir and in the father's name (i)u(l)kir. These features, a mixture of old and new, are characteristic of Bornholm inscriptions. Observe the ways preposition “after” and substantive “stone” are spelt, and note when the o-rune occurs and when it does not. Look at the primly conventional orthography of Vester Marie 2 – which then suddenly relaxes its pose and writes uk for auk and raistu for raispu.

Part 1

Face A: (kun)iltr : l(e)t:
r(e)isa : st(e)n :
þ(e)n(sa) : ef

Face B: tir : auþbiarn :
bonta : sin :
kristr :

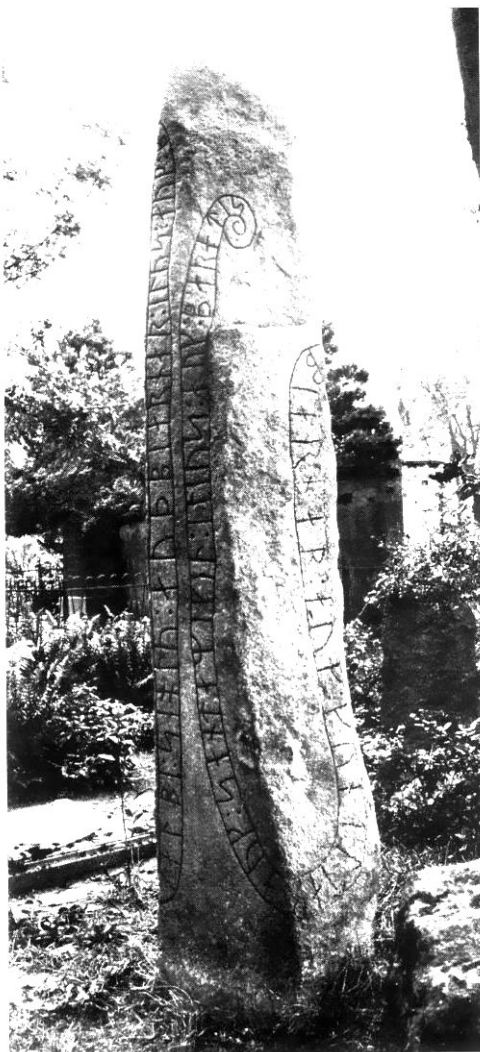
Face C: hialbi : siolu :
auþbiarnar :
ilus : auk : bratis

Part 2

Face A: kristr : hialbi :
siolu : (auþ)

Face D: biarnar : auk :
ku[niltar]

Face C: : auk santamikel
: ilius : auk :
baratis



Face C-D

NAMES IN RUNES

The personal names and nicknames the inscriptions preserve for us are partly common Scandinavian property, partly peculiar to Denmark. Among the latter are *Bramr* Sövestad 2, *Finulfr* Skern 2, *Gormr* Jelling, *Knutr* Simris 2, *Opinka(u)r* Gørlev and elsewhere, *RoiR* Hunnestad 1. Most names are made up of two elements. Many are original by-names that



- 339 Klemensker stone 7, Bornholm. 150 cm. Retouched photograph. — Although what is left of this inscription refers to an archbishop (in the genitive), we cannot tell who he was or indeed understand what the inscription tried to say. It is perhaps most likely that the stone belongs to Period 3 and not to the Viking Age at all. The archbishop appears to have had a *mairæ* — whatever that is. Or were the rather stunted ai runes meant to be something else?

have been transformed into proper names — a custom which has flourished in Scandinavia, not least in the Viking Age.

Many names are descriptive of personal qualities or refer to something distinctive in appearance. Several of this kind are found in Scandinavia, both as nicknames and personal names: e.g. *Brandr* Håstad — stick, (fire-)brand, *Gamal* Valkärra — old one, *Skarði* Haddeby 3 — hare-lipped one, *Soti* Glavendrup — sooty one.

Examples of names referring to personal characteristics are *Enraði* Rimsø — the self-willed, *Wrestr* Köpinge — the wriggling one, the reluctant, *Uflar* Glenstrup 2 — the un-deceitful, the honest (?), *Umon(r)* Norra Nöbbelöv — the un-parsimonious, the generous, *Ærra* Hällestad 2 — the pugnacious.

The name *Umonr* is an instance of “litotes” — that negative mode of expressing something positive which our ancestors loved — we have already met the word *unipingr*, for example, “un-dastard”. Since we cannot always decide whether a u-rune stands for *u*, *w* or *y*, we are left in doubt as to the interpretation of some names. The name cited above as *Uflar* appears in

the accusative, *ufla*, and this has also been read as a form of *Yfli*, (small) owl. The name *uraka* on the Källstorp stone, Skåne, can be read as *U-raka* or as *Wraga*, and only the existence of the place-name *Vragerup* in Skåne makes one prefer the latter. Similarly *urik* on the Lem stone can be taken as *Wrig* because we know a place called *Vrigsted*, but it is probably better understood as *u-rik*, unafraid, untroubled, calm. *Uroka* (*uruku*) on the Sønder Vinge stone was a name first given to someone who was difficult to get on with, while *Upwagin* on the †Gudum stone literally means “un-washed”. The dead brother on *Suldrup 2* was called *Ufagr*, not fey, not doomed.

It is not easy to decide whether animal names refer to qualities of character or physique. We find runic examples of *Björn* *Grensten* and elsewhere – bear (and *Isbjörn* – ice-bear, polar bear – on the *Solberga* stone but the first element can be understood differently), *Ravn* *Simris 1* (cf. *Læborg*) – raven, *Spurv* (?) *Randers 1* – sparrow, *Stær* *Virring* – starling, *Ulv* – *Hammel 1* and elsewhere – wolf. *Björn* and *Ulv* are productive final elements in compound names: *Arnbjörn*, *Kedelbjörn*, *Thorbjörn*, etc., *Asulv*, *Gunulv*, *Hærulv*, *Jærpulv*, etc.

Names referring to appearance are e.g. *Dværg* *Fosie* – dwarf, *Fain* *Egtved* – coloured one (perhaps the tattooed), *Ful*

Øster Larsker stone 3,
Bornholm. 197 cm. Re-
touched photograph (in-
scription only). – Dis-
covered during restora-
tion of the church in
1955 as a lintel stone
over the north door.
...rnils : auk : fuluki
: þ[eir litu rei]sa : stein :
þana : eftir : þormar :
buoþur : si[n] – ...rnils
and Ful(h)uge, they had
this stone set up in
memory of Thormar,
their brother.



Århus 3 – ugly one, *Hals Västra Karaby* – long-neck (or short-neck or fat-neck), *Spærla Tågerup* – skinny.

Other names are *Fundin Bække 1* – found (i.e. a foundling?), *Juti Skovlænge* – Jute, Jutlander, *Nykr Stora Köpinge* – goblin (?).

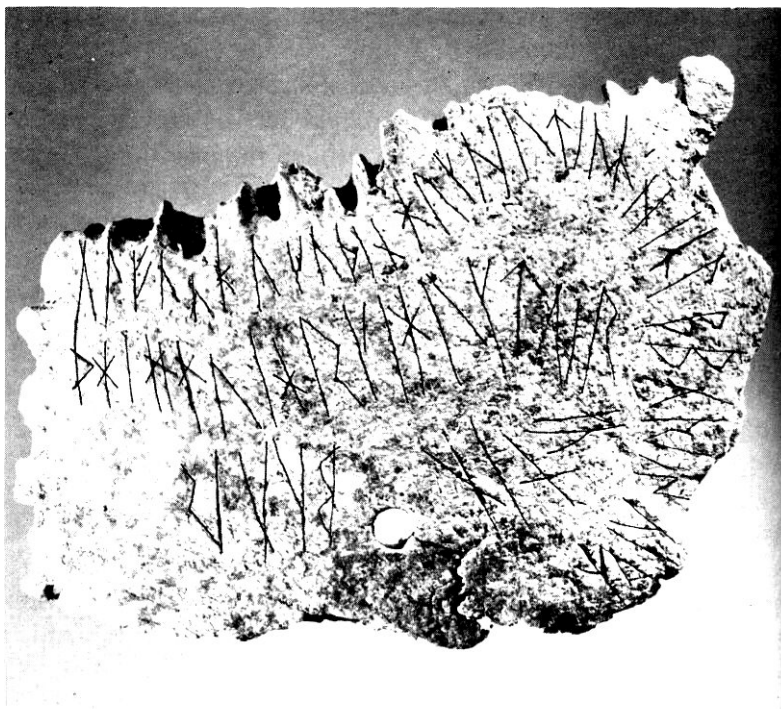
We meet genuine nicknames in the inscriptions, e.g. *Twæggi Hen Bjerregrav 1* (T. whetstone), *Toki Haklangr Bregninge* (T. long-chin), *Asbjørn Næf Tågerup* (A. neb); a nickname “fist” seems to occur on the Glumsø stone; *Tomi spar Baldringe* (T. the foresighted). The name *Svidbalke* on the Sporup stone (it is also known in Iceland) is of uncertain meaning. One of Sven Estridsson’s runic coins has the name *ulf litla* on it, Little Wolf (DaRun 25), and another *atsor iutska*, Asser the Jutish (DaRun 116). By-names, or akin to by-names, are *Kætil sa norrøni Egå* – Ketil the Norwegian, *Runulfr hin raþspaki Hune* – R. the wise in counsel, *Tosti hin skarpi Glemminge* – T. the sharp (possibly but less probably, the thin). The form with the definite article (*hin*) is also met with on a stone that must belong to the medieval period, at Oddum, put up in memory of Toke Toke’s son *hin usta* – *hin øzta*, the highest, the superior (rather than *hin ysta*, the youngest). The addition *hin drottinfasti* on Skern 2, the lord-loyal, is not a by-name but a laudatory epithet; so is *glamul*, the baying or eloquent (?), on the Tryggevælde stone.

A number of names are associated with the figures of the heathen pantheon, the *æsir*. Many – both male and female – have *As-* as their first element and many again have *Thor-*. As we have seen, however, we cannot safely assume the existence of Odin even in *Odinka(u)r*, a name which occurs four times (Gørlev, Haddeby 4, Skivum, Skern 2), and so must have been quite common. There are other names, such as *Hornbori Høje Tåstrup* and *Enraþi Rimsø*, which may have been originally derived from mythical figures. Attempts have been made to read the name of the war-god Tyr into *tuguta* on Ravnkilde 2 – this is certainly a difficult word to understand but it does not help at all to drag Tyr into the problem. The simplest “reading” gives *Ty-gota* – but that must then join the dozen or so other names that leave scholars at present completely baffled – names like *hala* (Vester Tørslev), *riuskr* (Suldrup 2),

risbiik (accusative, Gylling), kitu (genitive, Dalbyover), litu (genitive, Vester Tørslev).

Finally we should note the occurrence of some pet-names on rune stones – diminutives or hypocoristic names as they are called. Among them may be included the masculine names *Barni* Øster Marie 2, *Gubbi* Håstad, *Kari* Bjäresjö 1, *Sibbi* Karlevi and elsewhere, *Sweni* Glemminge, *Tobbi* Gårdstånga 3 and elsewhere, and the feminine names *Ginna* on the London stone, *Sibba* Alum 4, *Tofu* Sønder Vissing 1 and elsewhere, *Tonna* Sövestad 2 and elsewhere.

Place-names also occur in runic inscriptions, e.g. *ǫ salhaukum* (Snoldelev) – at Salløv, *i sbalklusu* (Sandby 3) – at Spragelse, both on Sjælland, *a enklanti i skiu* (Slesvig, South Jutland) – in England at “Skia”, *at ubsalum* (Hällestad) – at Uppsala, *ǫ ku[tlati]* (Sønder Kirkeby) – on Gotland, *hiþabu*, *haiþabu*, Hedeby (Haddeby stones 1 and 3, Århus 1).



- 151 Ribe cranium fragment, North Jutland. 6 × 9.5 cm. — It was an old skull the writer availed himself of — not the skull of someone just knocked on the head for the purpose. The text refers to the problem of deciding whether the piece of cranium (with a hole for carrying it by) served as an amulet or a “document” — a letter. On the photograph the runes have been retouched.

Viking Age objects with runes

Objects dated to the Primitive Norse-Viking Age transition period — objects, that is, with runes drawn partly or wholly from the new 16-letter futhark and with inscriptions in a language that can be acknowledged in whole or in part as Old Danish — are listed on pp. 150ff. Like the stone inscriptions, they are grouped according to the chronological evidence that can be brought to bear, from script, language and archaeology.

The oldest object so far discovered – dated on archaeological grounds to the seventh century – is the *Lousgård* “bead” (Bornholm) with the runes: 161

ᚱ ᚠ ᚠ ᚦ ᚦ ᚦ - ᚦ (ᚱ)
? h i l t ? t m

But since it cannot be decided with absolute certainty whether ᚱ stands for s or j and whether ᚦ means a or n, we must suspend judgment on this inscription, though in all probability the runes do belong to the new alphabet [1].

Next in time comes the *Alborg buckle* (North Jutland), dated archaeologically to AD 700–750 [2]; it is inscribed with: *348

ᚱ ᚠ ᚦ | ᚱ or ᚱ ᚠ ᚦ | ᚱ
f u t i s k u t i s

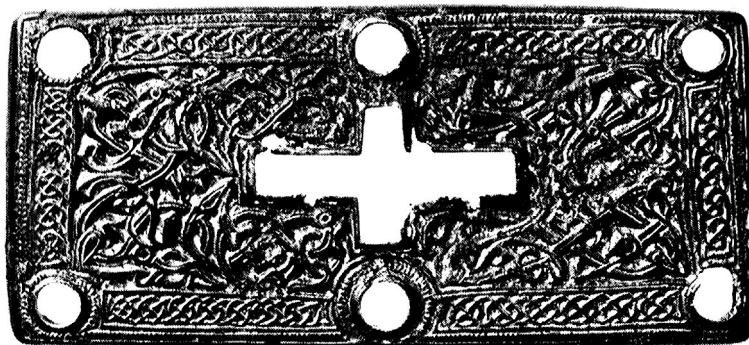
As ᚱ here can only stand for s (and not j), we are certainly faced with a character from the new futhark, and if we can read the first rune as ᚱ (cf. Eggjum, Norway), then it too is a novelty from the same fount. Whether it is taken to stand for f or k, we get a man’s name as that of the brooch’s owner. Uncertainty about the stage reached by this rune-master is compounded by two further difficulties. First, it cannot be proved that the inscription and brooch are contemporary (runes can be scratched on a metal surface at any time), but the circumstances of the find make it impossible to think of dating the runes later than about 800. Second, the inscription contains none of the runes (m, h, A) which would show us whether the writer was an exponent of transitional runes or of the pure 16-rune alphabet.

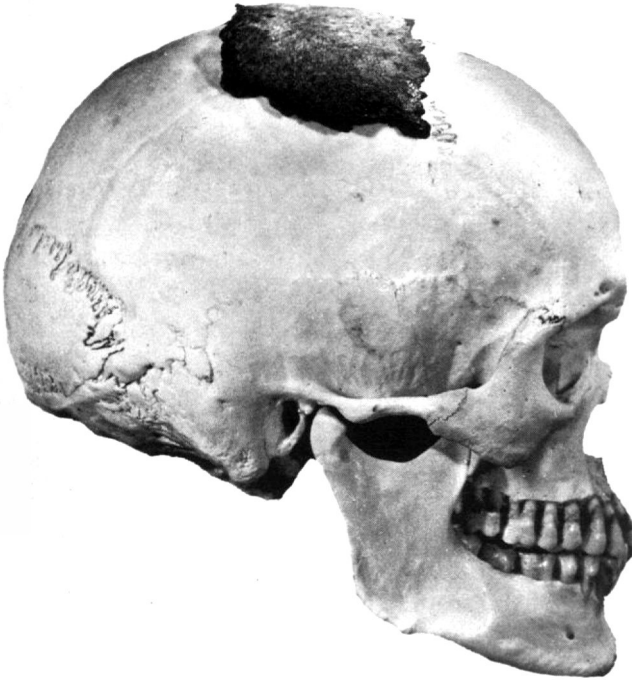
The Ribe cranium, North Jutland, also appears to be of eighth-century date – judging by the stratigraphy, certainly not later than c. 800. This long inscription with its many transitional runes (A, g, h and m) shows that the finished 16-letter futhark was definitely not at this writer’s disposal. The inscription is mysterious, very mysterious – but the same is true of many inscriptions on sticks from this period, and Sweden too has a multitude of incomprehensible inscriptions on objects [3]. *349

151 The difficulties of the inscription on this piece of skull were explained earlier. One of them is the absence of division marks in places important to us; another is that we lack the comparable finds that might clarify the linguistic and cultural context. The piece of cranium has a hole in it to take a cord so that it could be worn. That hole was made from the inner side before the runes were incised, and this is an argument in favour of considering the piece an amulet of some kind. On the other hand, if the inscription proved to contain a message, one can envisage circumstances in which it might be desirable to have such a “document” attached to or concealed on the bearer’s person.

*350 *Lindholm knife-haft*, North Jutland:
 sikasuaia || purufiripilikapi
 Singasven (?) polished for Thorfrid.

347 Ålborg buckle, North Jutland. 4.5 × 10 cm. — The first rune is damaged and two readings possible, either futis or kutis, both representing a man’s name in the genitive. Archaeologically the brooch is firmly dated to the first half of the eighth century, but the runes offer no basis for a dating except to the Viking Age in general — on the evidence of the s-rune. That would be important if it could be shown that the runes and the brooch were contemporary. But all one can say at present is that the context of the find makes it unlikely that the runes were inscribed after about AD 800.





The Ribe cranium fragment is shown here placed on a more recent skull (by courtesy of Dr J. Balslev Jørgensen) to indicate its original location. 151

This is Anders Bæksted's interpretation. He assumes that k in sika denotes ng (cf. trik = *dreng*) and the second a in suaia is an error for (suai)n. It seems hard to think of anything better [4], and the idea of a young man polishing a knife-handle for his girl is appealing.

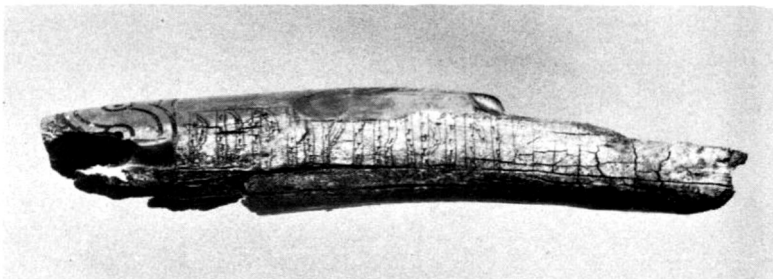
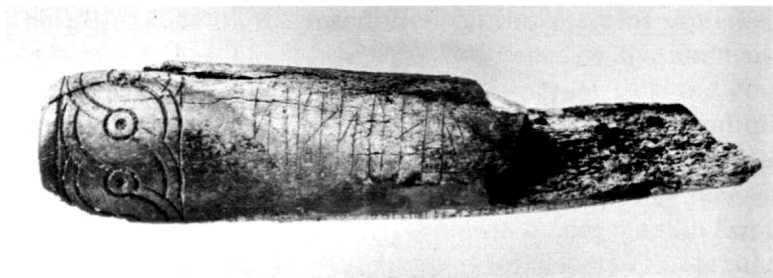
Haddeby comb, South Jutland:

*ᚲᚲᚲ(ᚲ) ...

AU S U (t) ...

*351

Runes in double outline. The comb is dated on archaeological grounds to the ninth century (probably the early part of it), so the first rune most probably represents A (not h as Krause



- 348 Lindholm knife-haft, North Jutland. 8.2 cm. — Dated c. 800 on archaeological grounds. The runes probably name the giver and the recipient.

assumed [5]). An elongated depression between the third and fourth runes is possibly, but not probably, a division mark. It is likely that the inscription is a personal name.

- *352 *Hemdrup stick* (North Jutland) is no less mysterious than the Ribe cranium. The inscription runs:

uanþikiba · fiukati · ʒsaauaʒubi

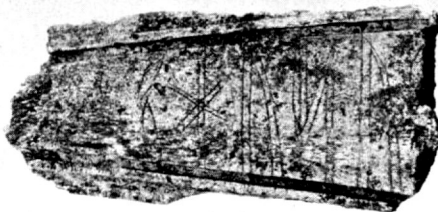
Like the Ribe master, the writer has obligingly put in a couple of dividing marks — unfortunately, not enough to help. We can however find a natural division between uan and þik, because *np* was assimilated to *nn* already in the Primitive Norse period, and if it were Old Danish *wændæ* (modern *vende* “to turn”) we were dealing with, an early writer of the 16-letter futhark would have used a *t*-rune for *d*, not a *þ*-rune. We thus arrive at uan þik iba, where uan = won (as on the great Jelling stone),

pik = you (accusative singular), and iba is perhaps the adverb *æfa*, never.

The runes *fiukati* are painlessly read as *fiukandi*, present participle of the intransitive verb *fiuka*, to drive or blow in turbulent fashion, storm, whirl. We cannot tell whether *asa* is nominative singular of the woman's name, *Åsa* (Åse) or genitive plural of the word *áss* (pagan god) until we have solved the riddle of the whole inscription – but although the last group of runes divides naturally into *aua a ubi* (where *a* is preposition “on”), we seem no closer to a solution.

A Swedish inscription on a piece of sheet bronze may put us on the track of the meaning of the mysterious message on the Hemdrup stick. I am thinking of the bronze plate from Högstena in Västergötland – well known to all lovers of magic charms [6]. It contains a spell uttered against . . . the riding one, the running one, the sitting one, the signing one, the travelling one . . . and *uiþr fliuhanda*, *wiþr fliuganda*, against the flying one. It has been suggested that this warding-off spell, which was found in a churchyard, was directed against a dead-walker. Whether that is so or not does not directly concern the Hemdrup stick. But all those present participles do remind us of *fiukandi*. Could this also be a substantivised participle and mean “the storming one”? And if so, could it refer to some raging sickness? It is distinctly peculiar that the longest and finest of medieval Danish inscriptions on any separate object – the Ribe healing-stick – should also contain a present participle denoting a sickness or its demon-cause – *biuindæ* – 493
from the intransitive verb (modern *bæve*), to quake, tremble – and “the quaking one” stands for the shivers, the ague.

Haddeby comb, South Jutland. 3.5 cm. — Showing the preserved runes among which * perhaps stands for A (not h) if the comb belongs to the early ninth century: Ausu(t) ... — perhaps a proper name.



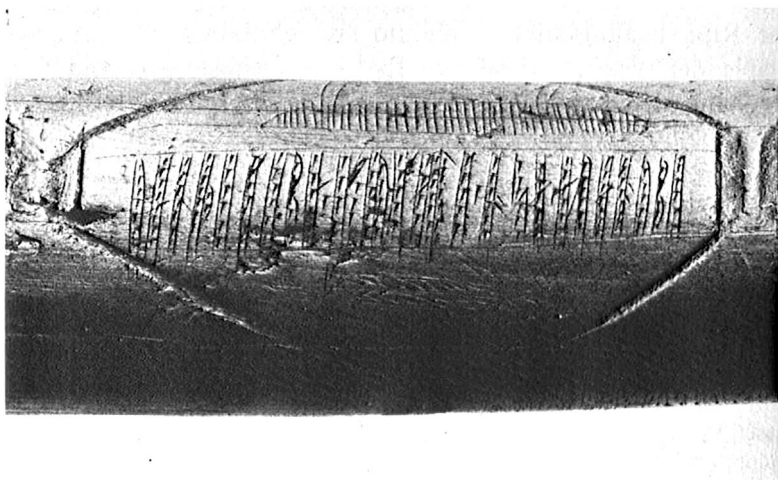
If “the storming one” is the name of a sickness, then being in the nominative it must be the subject of the sentence of which uan and þik are verb and object. If that is the case, it is most straightforward to take asa as the woman’s name Åse and regard her as the person addressed. With some plausibility we can then propose the following translation:

The Stormer never overcame you, Åse — auaqubi.

I leave it to the *savants* among my readers to get their teeth into the last seven runes [7].

The stick is decorated with a polygonal pattern and has much more on it than the runic inscription alone. Beneath the inscription is a childishly-drawn human figure (at right-angles to the lettering) and above it a primitive animal. The runes are set in one of the polygons, and in the next one there is a

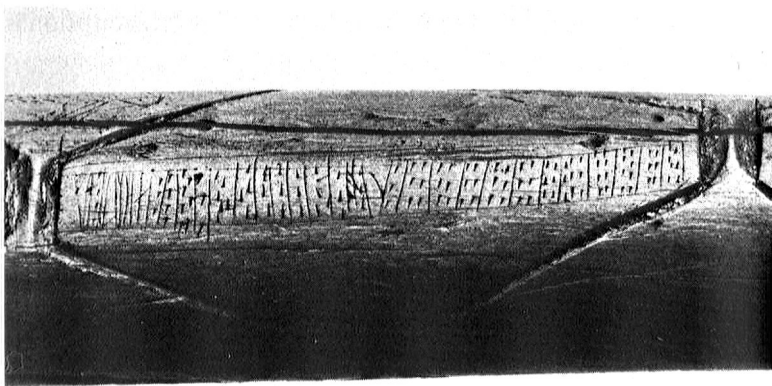
- 350 Hemdrup stick, North Jutland. 50 cm. — From the ninth century. — The inscription perhaps contains a charm against “the storming one” — some kind of illness. The stick also has primitive pictures on it and unexplained secret writing. There are excellent colour pictures of it in Skalk 1971.



beautifully incised triquetra (cf. Jelling 2). Between these two polygons are two more naive animals and then yet another polygon encloses the secret message shown in the photograph below: we notice that the points of some of the “cuneiform” prick-marks turn upwards and some downwards.

Certain odd circumstances to do with the discovery of this stick of ashwood deserve to be recorded – if only to illustrate the methods archaeologists *can* employ to conserve the Danish past. The head of the museum in Hjørring was a local dentist, Holger Friis. It was he who brought me the stick one day in October 1949. He told me that he heard of the stick from one of his patients, who had found it deep down in a bog in Hemdrup. His spade had hit it several times and it had now been at home with him for a couple of weeks. With his pincers round one of the patient’s molars, Friis told him firmly to bring him the stick next day well wrapped in wet newspaper. He did.

The secret writing on the Hemdrup stick. – It begins with the runes (f)u ; (n)ilui*ai*, followed by a series of cuneiform marks made with a knife-point – they vary in number and some have their points turned one way, some the opposite way. The key to the secret writing certainly depends on this variation. Who can break the code?





- 354 Skabersjö buckle, Skåne. Front side and a detail from the back. 14.3 × 6.3 cm. Retouched runes on the photograph. — The Ålborg buckle and the Skabersjö buckle were made at about the same time, say c. 700, but while we cannot decide whether the Ålborg runes are of an age with the buckle or a century or so younger, what is preserved of the long Skabersjö inscription shows that it was certainly a much later addition, probably from c. 1025.

Skabersjö buckle, Skåne, is dated on archaeological grounds to c. 700 or earlier, but the estimated date of the inscription is c. 1025:

...(RR)RRRRRRRRRRRRRR(r)api(tu)kfaufafiarsisinaiakasapui lau
nat | ...

to be divided thus: (24–25 R-runes, 13 — perhaps 15 — legible)
— (r)api t(uk) fauka fiar sis in iak asa þui launat . . .
(R)ade took fauka of his property and with that I, Åse, have
rewarded (NN) ...

The buckle has lines of runes on its long sides — one of the sides (with the beginning of the inscription) is reproduced here. On the other side only a few scattered runes can be read, and

possibly: *suafakat*. The first rune in the first name is a “broad” rune, *u* or *r*, probably the latter. — The reading given above was the result of study under a modern microscope and it differs from the one in *DaRun*. The spelling *asa* (for earlier *asa*) dates the inscription into the eleventh century [9].

The inscription says that a man took *fauka* (a word we do not understand but which probably refers to the buckle) from his property and apparently delivered it to a lady — *Åse* — who in turn has used it to reward someone for doing her (and *Rade*?) a service. The significance of the many *r*-runes at the beginning is obscure. One may be reminded of the five similar runes incised on “*Absalon’s ring*” from about 1200, but it is unlikely that the two series of *r*-runes have the same ideas behind them. It is worth noticing, in passing, that all the *r*-runes on the *Skabersjö* brooch except the last are ranged along the lower frame-line, while all the runes of the intelligible inscription dodge up and down at some distance above the scratched base-line.

487

Haddeby bone, South Jutland:
likasisakasi

Haddeby bone, South Jutland. 20 cm. — Unlike the other *Haddeby* inscriptions, this one is in Danish runes. It reads: *likasisakasi* — the meaning of which (to put it mildly) is unclear.



Not interpreted. Unlike inscriptions on other objects from Haddeby (but cf. the soapstone vessel below), this one is in Danish runes, very carelessly carved. The second rune looks like a reverse u-rune but its secondary stave appears quite different from the lines of all the other runes, almost as if it had been scratched in with a fingernail and had nothing to do with the inscription itself (the letter is given as i in the transcript above). *Soapstone vessel from Haddeby*, South Jutland – dated on archaeological evidence to c. 1000: *fup* – which may be interpreted (1) as the first three runes of the futhark, or (2) as substantive *fup*, female genitalia. The inscription was included as nr 417 in *DaRun*, published by Lis Jacobsen and me in 1942. We were so innocent that we only saw it as the opening runes of the futhark, which we said were “presumably” used for a magic purpose (in varying degrees everybody had magic on the brain in those days). Subsequently the many inscriptions from Bergen have come to light, among these Aslak Liestøl has found several with *fup* in the second meaning given above [10]. He discusses one (in Kuml 1970) which “decidedly belongs in a male society such as a ship’s crew or a company of soldiers”. This inscription is on a wooden stick and names three men who are known from narrative sources to have lived in the first half of the thirteenth century. The *Bergen inscription* reads:

Ion silkifup a mek en guþormr fuþsllæikir | ræist mik en :
 ion fuþkula ræþr mek
 Jon silk-*fup* owns me, and Guttorm *fup*-licker carved me, and
 Jon *fup*-bump reads me.

478 A versified inscription of a similar obscene kind has recently been found in Slesvig – it is a medieval piece (like the Bergen stick) and therefore discussed under Period 3 below.

*357 *Gravlev stick*, North Jutland – uncertain whether Viking Age or medieval, most probably from 1000–1050:

‡ kukukuburríkíkiki ‡ i??(a)??lh(n)i(f)ka : uirisiue
 Not interpreted [8].

Gravlev stick, North Jutland. 21 cm. — An (apparently) meaningless sequence of runes, kukuku ... kikiki, and other remarkable combinations. No interpretation can be offered, and it is impossible to form any definite opinion on the function of the stick and the runes. Is the “formula” like that on the Hemdrup stick but at a lower level — like the one on the Roskilde stick from Period 3?

Viborg buckle, North Jutland. 8.3 × 3.8 cm. Runes 4–6 mm. None of the interpretations mentioned in the text strikes one as obviously right; but the inscription is obviously right as an example to show what a gap divides us from the language and culture of the Viking Age – its immensity is evidenced by the Hemdrup runes and will be further confirmed by the Haddeby sticks.



- *357 *Viborg buckle*, North Jutland; archaeological dating 900–925:
lukisliua

There will always be doubts attached to the interpretation of an inscription as short as this and without dividing marks – also bearing in mind the fact that the first three runes can denote *luk*, *lok*, *lōk*, *lyk*, *lug* (etc.), *lung* (etc.), and the further fact that both in this word and in *liua* the initial *l* might represent etymological *hl*. It would be most natural to read the runes as an owner's tag: *lukis liua*, the first word being a name in the genitive, the second a term for the buckle. Or it could be divided up: *luk is liua* = the buckle (?) is Leve's (or Live's) – in either case the name is that of a man (as on the Ålborg buckle).

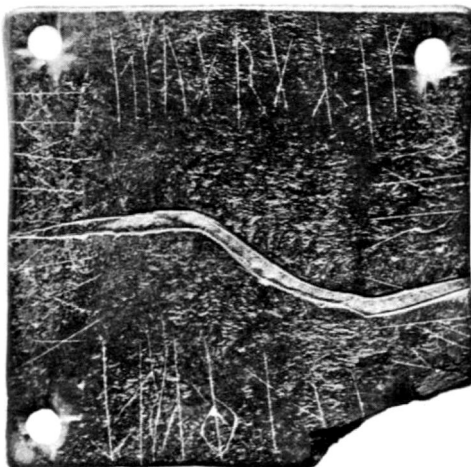
Two other widely different interpretations show how variously this little sequence of runes can be viewed. Arthur Nördén read *lok æs læwa* which he took to mean “ended are misfortunes”, while Harry Andersen divided the runes into *lu kisli ua*, three nouns, one meaning shelter, one meaning buckle, and one meaning woe. The former reading has several linguistic defects, the latter may seem to be rather too much of a construct [11].

- *359 *Lund weaving-tablet*, Skåne:
skuaraṛ : iki | mar : afa | (m)an : mn̄ · krat · | aallatti :
Ingemar Sigvor's son (or Sigvor's Ingemar) shall have my weep-
ing (or my grief or misfortune) – aallatti!

An *i*-rune has been forgotten in *skuaraṛ*, for *sikuaraṛ*, genitive of the woman's name, Sigvor; and another *i* is omitted in the ligatured *mn̄*.

- 158 It is probably most straightforward to see the inscription as the curse of a rejected girl – directed against Ingemar (who has perhaps found a new girl called Sigvor). As the Norns weave the fates of men, so a woman in Lund – who does not give her own name (like the author of the Gørlev inscription who merely says, “*I* placed the runes”) – weaves a curse against a lover. I take the last eight runes to form the magic word which unlocks the wizardry, actuates the curse, corresponding

Lund weaving-tablet, Skåne. 4.6 × 4.6-4.7 cm, 1.5 cm thick; made of bone. — Perhaps contains a curse on a lover who has scorned a woman — she incised (or got someone else to incise) the runes which declare that “Ingemar shall get my weeping” — her woe will be transferred to him once the curse is triggered by the final magic word in the inscription: *aallatti!* This can probably be compared with *gagaga* on the Primitive Norse Kragehul spear-shaft or with *amen* on the medieval Ribe healing-stick.

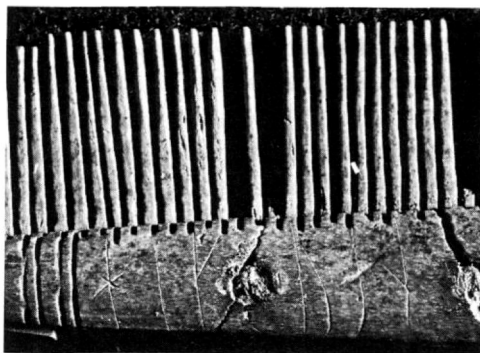


358

*101

*495

Århus comb, North Jutland. 17 cm. — Judging by design and inscription, from the first half of the tenth century. Contains the English name, *Hægwin*, certainly that of the owner.



361

to *gagaga* on the Kragehul spear-shaft, the words of exorcism in the Canterbury charm (cf. below), and “amen” on the Ribe stick.

103

360

The weaving-tablet inscription with its twenty-four runes (counting *m̄n* as one) and its eight-rune magic word at the end has loomed large in the great wave of number-magic which the Norwegian scholar, Magnus Olsen, once sent rolling over Scandinavia (cf. *DaRun*, nr 311). But in dealing with such an inscription as this, we have to bear in mind practical considera-

tions of the space available and the possibility of unintentional omission [12]. Runic number-magic is the brain-child of modern runologists.

366 *Canterbury charm* against sickness, British Museum, London:

YDRITHTRÞNTRÞTRÞNþNÞNTTHTHTNÞRNIÞTÞT

RHTTRNTHTINDRITHTRÞNTRÞNIBRÞRÞNTR.

kurilsarþuarafarþunufuntinistþuruigipik | þorsatrutiniurilsar
þuarauipraprauari (the runes are in a single line) [13], to be
divided up like this:

kuril sarþuara far þu nu funtin is tu – þur uigi þik þ(u)rsa
trutin – kuril sarþuara – uipr aprauari.

In the translation we begin with the title – uipr aprauari –
though it actually comes at the end:

Against blood-poison (literally, blood-vessel pus).

Gyrl wound-causer, go now, you are found. Thor hallow you
(to perdition), lord of giants (demons), Gyrl wound-causer
[14].

Fundamentally the same exorcism is on *an amulet found in
Sigtuna* in Sweden:

þur × sarriþu × þursa trutin fliu þu nu funtin is

Giant of wound-fever, giants' lord, flee now, you are found.

The *Canterbury charm* is in an Anglo-Saxon manuscript
finished in 1073. The runes were inserted in a convenient
empty space, though no one knows when. The copyist seems
however to have had an exemplar which was probably not
written later than about 1000. We are probably justified there-
fore in disregarding the o-rune which the scribe puts before
rsa – it must be his error for u, like his i for k initially in
iuril.



Bornholm amulet. 2.5 cm. A Cufic coin from Samarkand minted between 907 and 913. — Assumed to be a coin that was tucked in with a corpse in his coffin some time in the eleventh century. The runes contain Latin prayers for the life eternal.

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It was commonly believed in earlier times that disease was the result of possession by devils, and the patient could not be cured until the demon was identified and driven out. See the exemplary incantation from Ribe which, though probably medieval (c. 1300), is based on a much older, pre-Christian charm, known all over Europe.

The sequence of ideas in the Canterbury (and the Sigtuna) charm is: the demon (called *purs*, a kind of giant) is addressed by name, he has been located and identified, and because his name is known, his power is broken.

Århus comb, North Jutland, is an ordinary Viking Age comb and the runes on it are ordinary Viking Age runes:

*359

hik i uin

This is an English name, Hægwin, and he was presumably the owner of the comb [15]. Note the small vertical division mark in the middle of the name (like kun i ualt on the Snoldelev stone). Thanks to that we may conjecture that it was inscribed in the first half of the tenth century. The comb was found in

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1964 during excavation of a burnt-down sunken-floor house in Århus. On the basis of the finds, the archaeologists agree that the house – and the comb – must be from the tenth century and most likely from the beginning of it.

- *361 *Bornholm amulet*, a Cufic coin from AD 907–913:
 Obverse: outer circle: $\widehat{\text{is}}\widehat{\text{iasususkristus}}\widehat{\text{filu}}\widehat{\text{istiifinominab}}$
 central lines: $\text{iusins} \mid \text{atrisiifil} \mid \text{insbiritu} \mid \text{sn}$
 Reverse: $(b)\text{istusb} \mid \text{bius}\widehat{\text{an}}\widehat{\text{kuisfifib}} \mid \widehat{\text{fitam}} \mid \widehat{\text{tirna}} \mid \text{mkustotap}(\widehat{\text{is}})$

The obverse is to be split up like this: $\text{is iasus} < \text{us} > \text{kristus}$
 $\text{filuis tii fifi nomina bius inn[omine] satris ii[nomine] fil[ii]}$
 $\text{inn[omine] sbiritus s[a]n[kti]}$

Comparison with the following normalised Latin form will show the many errors and abbreviations:

Es Iesus Christus filius dei vivi. Nomina pius in nomine patris, in nomine filii, in nomine spiritus sancti.

The reverse is to be read as: $(b)\text{istusb} \mid \text{bius sankuis fifib}$
 $\text{fitam [i]tirnam kustot[i]ap(is)}$

That is: $(b)\text{istusb} \textit{ pius sanguis vivit, vitam æternam custodiat is.}$

A translation of the whole gives: You are Jesus Christ, the son of the living God (St Peter's words to Christ, Matth. 16.16). Name devoutly – in the name of the Father, in the name of the Son, and in the name of the Holy Ghost. – $(b)\text{istusb}$. The gracious blood lives, may it preserve everlasting life.

A glance at the illustration will persuade the reader that, in spite of his errors, it was a fine achievement on the inscriber's part to get so much onto a coin the size of a ten-penny piece. Interpretation presents no problems apart from the mysterious $(b)\text{istusb}$. The coin as marked must certainly be counted a good amulet to have about one at any time of night or day – if it was not perhaps a thoughtful gift for someone already in a coffin. The fact that the talismanic formula is general rather than specific might indicate this, as might also the words on



Dublin antler, Fishamble Street, Dublin, Ireland, and detail with the runes. Unmistakable Danish runes. (* h, † a, † n, † R). That *hurn hiartar* means “horn of hart” is evident. But what does *la ausar* mean? 364

the reverse which echo the prayer of the priest as he receives the chalice at mass: *Sanguis Domini nostri Jesu Christi custodiat animam meam in vitam aeternam*. The coin-inscriber must have had these sentences written down for him to copy, presumably in Roman letters, and the spelling f for v in *fifip* = *vivit* shows that his informant — doubtless a cleric — was of German origin.

The coin is from Samarkand, minted during the reign of Ahmed ibn Ismail. It probably came to Bornholm with the flood of Cufic coins that washed over Scandinavia in the tenth century and were deposited thickest on Gotland and Bornholm.

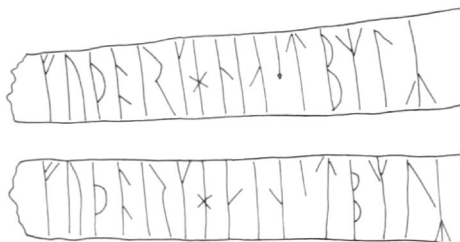
If the coin was inscribed on Bornholm, it was probably after the conversion of the islanders by Bishop Egin (1060–1072).

The script suggests it is more or less contemporary with Bornholm's stone inscriptions, some of which also use the o-rune. All the other runes on the coin are pure Viking Age types.

A Danish runic inscription in Ireland. F. Wallace's excavation of the Fishamble Street site in Dublin in 1980 brought two interesting runic pieces to light, first: a wooden stick with two futharks which excitingly illustrate the transition, or an interim stage of it, from the Danish 16-rune alphabet to the Swedish-Norwegian stut-rune series; and second, an antler with purely Danish runes inscribed on it. In 1982 Mr Wallace wrote to me as follows: "The runes from the Fishamble Street excavations include that on a deer's antler . . . , E 172: 9630, an alphabet or Futhark carved on either side of a wooden stave, E 172:6158 . . . The inscribed antler was found in a context of the first half of the 11th century, the futharks being from slightly later contexts of the same century." As well as precise details of the find-spots, he generously sent a bundle of excellent photographs and drawings.

It was mainly Norwegians who "colonised" the Irish coasts, but in itself it is no more surprising to find a Danish runic inscription in Dublin than a Swedish or Norwegian one in He-deby. The Danish character of the Fishamble Street antler inscription is fully confirmed by features as the a- and n-

The Dublin futharks, Fishamble Street, Dublin, Ireland. (Cf. the caption to the Dublin antler.) Length of stick c. 22 cm. Both show interesting transition forms between the Danish 16-rune alphabet and the Swedish-Norwegian stut-rune futhark. The runes u, h, t, b, m and r are Danish; a, n and s are stut-rune forms; the others are a cross-breed.



forms with their cross-strokes and the forms of the h-, s- and r-runes. The rune-forms are in no way at odds with the archaeological dating.

What was the message of this Danish viking or merchant? It goes like this:

* Ð R ʝ : * l ʝ R T ʝ ʞ : ʞ ʝ : ʝ Ð ʝ ʝ ʞ
 h u r n h i a r t a r l a a u s a r

The only words we can be sure we understand are the first two: “horn of hart”, deer’s antler. The rest is a puzzle, emphasising once again how cut off we are from the culture of that by-gone age and how helpless in the face of any inscription that departs from the well-worn formula, “A placed this stone in memory of B”. — The word *la* can be the ON noun *hlé*, shelter (English “lee”), or the preterite singular of the verb *liggja*, to lie. The word *ausar* may be a substantive or a personal name in either the genitive or the nominative. Possible transcriptions are: *aus(s)aR*, *os(s)aR*, *ʝs(s)aR*, *ʝs(s)aR*. Is it the hart’s horn which gives “shelter” in some way? The accomplished reader will provide his own solution — but don’t be too imaginative.

NOTES

- 1 Cf. E. Moltke, *FestskrSkautrup*, 1956, pp. 1 ff.; K.M. Nielsen, *ÅrbOldk.* 1969, pp. 23 ff.
- 2 E. Moltke, *ÅrbOldk.* 1963, pp. 122 ff.; K.M. Nielsen, *ÅrbOldk.* 1969, p. 24.
- 3 Cf. Arthur Nordén, *Arkiv f. nord. Fil.* 1937, pp. 147 ff., and *Kungl. Vitterh. Hist. och Ant. Akademiens Handl.*, Del 55. *Antikv. Stud.* I, pp. 143 ff.
- 4 *Acta Archaeol.* XXIV, 1953, pp. 196 ff. Krause, *Runen* p. 95. A: vielleicht = *sigga svæin(n)* “Siggis Bursche”, B: “Für Th. glättete (er) es. Oder: der Th. gefiel es”.
- 5 *Nachr. der Akad. der Wiss. in Göttinge.* I. *Phil.-Hist. Kl.* 1963, nr 3, pp. 82 ff.
- 6 *Sveriges runinskrifter: Västergötland*, nr 216.

- 7 A lot has been written about this inscription. Interpretations offered by Peter Skautrup and K.M. Nielsen turn on a misreading of a vital element and will not be discussed here; but cf. Harald Andersen, *Den brændte stok*, Skalk 1971, nr 5, pp. 18 ff., and E. Moltke, Skalk 1972, nr 1, p. 21. — N.Å. Nielsen (*Danske runeindskrifter*, pp. 59ff.) transcribes the last runes: *Asa ey a q ufi* and interprets: Asa has luck in struggle.
- 8 E. Moltke, *Danske Studier* 1951, pp. 30 ff.
- 9 For a mistaken view see K.M. Nielsen, *ÅrbOldk.* 1969, pp. 24 f.
- 10 Cf. also Jan Zak — Evert Salberger, *Ein Runenfund von Kamień Pomorski [earlier Cammin] in Westpommern*, *Meddel. från Lunds Univ. Hist. Mus.* 1962–63 (1963), pp. 324 ff. (a rib-bone with fup on one side, kur on the other; archaeological dating 1000–1050).
- 11 In *Arkiv f. nord. Fil.* 1937, pp. 157 ff., and *ÅrbOldk.* 1943, pp. 168 ff., respectively.
- 12 Cf. the article “talmagi” in *DaRun*; Anders Bæksted, *Målruner og troldruner*, 1952, pp. 192 f.
- 13 This reproduction of the Canterbury runes comes from *DaRun*, cols 489–90, but Ingrid Sanness Johnsen points out that it is defective in one matter. She writes: “In October 1971 when I was in the British Museum I took a peep at the manuscript in question. All the runes are now quite clear, the left side ends with *pik* and the right begins with *þF* (NB the form *F*) . . . According to the information given, the manuscript was rebound in 1902, and these two runes must have come out clearly then.” As far as I can remember, the reproduction in *DaRun* (now repeated here) was taken from Ivar Lindquist, *Religiösa runtexter I*, 1932, pl. 4. I have never seen the manuscript myself.
- 14 Gerd Høst, *NoTSpr.* 1952, pp. 342 ff. (with reference to Anne Holtsmark).
- 15 E. Moltke, Skalk 1965, nr 2, p. 13, and *FestskrMarsén*, *hikuin* 2, 1975, pp. 145 ff.

Stut-rune inscriptions

Stut-runes — also called Swedish-Norwegian runes and “short-twig” or “short-branch” runes (sometimes Rök-runes too, after the famous Swedish stone) — must have a brief word before we go on to deal with the inscriptions themselves. To illumine the problems that beset the relations between them and the Danish runes I repeat the two 16-letter futharks we have seen before: Danish on the Gørlev stone, stut-rune on the (Swedish) Haddeby stick 1:

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ƿ ŋ þ ƿ ʀ ʀ ʀ * ʀ ʀ ʀ ʀ ʀ ʀ ʀ ʀ ʀ ʀ
futharkhnia stbmlr

The Danish futhark on the Gørlev stone, c. AD 900.

ƿ ʀ þ ʀ ʀ ʀ ʀ ʀ ʀ ʀ ʀ ʀ ʀ ʀ ʀ ʀ ʀ
futharkhnia stbmlr
 ʀ ʀ ʀ

(‘m’ turned upside-down)

The stut-rune futhark on Haddeby stick 1. Variants from Haddeby stick 2 are given in the second line. C. AD 800 or later.

It has been maintained that the Danish runes were preferred for epigraphy (on stone, that is), while the stut-runes were chiefly used for writing on wood and represent the script of the commercial world.

Since we possess inscriptions in both sorts of runes on both sorts of material, stone and wood, there is not much to be said in favour of this theory.

It has also been maintained that the stut-runes are older than the Danish runes. But this is not very plausible either, for the following reasons.

A glance at the two futharks will be enough to convince anyone that they are intimately related: after all, they contain the same sixteen runes in the same order. *One of them could not have come into existence without the other* [1].

As was shown in detail above, the Danish futhark developed quite naturally from the 24-letter futhark, several letters of which it retained without alteration, e.g. ʃ (not ʃ) = n, ʈ (not ʈ) = t, ʁ (not ʁ or ʁ) = b.

We may call it just about incontestable that the stut-rune futhark looks like a simplification of the Danish – and in that case must obviously be later (just as the Hälsinge runes – stave-less runes – are a simplification of the stut-runes and therefore later again).

Neither is it difficult with the material to hand to give a reasonable explanation of the origin of stut-runes and to see who used them and for what purpose.

Hedeby was a Danish-Swedish town, controlled now by Danes, now by Swedes. The Danish Viking Age alphabet, the 16-letter futhark, which like its 24-letter predecessor was designed for cutting in wood, evidently seemed a little cumbersome and old-fashioned to the Swedes in Hedeby. Not willing to lag behind the Danes, they took the Danish futhark as a pattern and made themselves a new one that was considerably simpler (though not quite so practical in a couple of features).

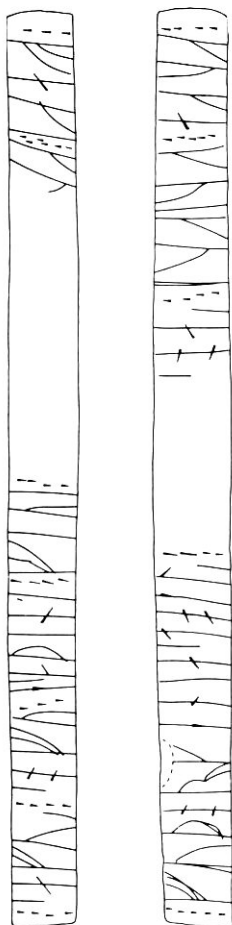
194 196 The two Haddeby stones (2 and 4), put up by King Gnupa's Danish queen in memory of their son, clearly and graphically display the existence of the two nationalities in Hedeby – one is inscribed with Danish runes, the other partly with Swedish runes – stut-runes.

Stut-rune inscriptions have nothing to do with Viking businessmen and easy cursive writing as opposed to epigraphy

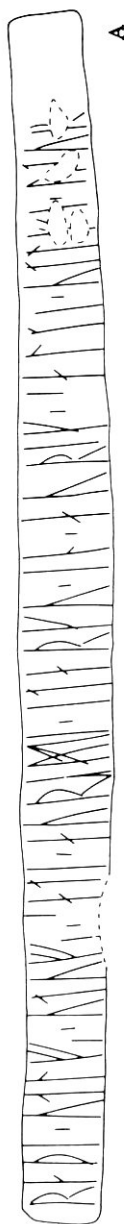
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Haddeby stick 1, South Jutland. 16.2 cm. Illustration from Aslak Liestøl. – What is at present most important about this incomprehensible inscription is that it contains the Swedish-Norwegian futhark – the stut-rune futhark – and this on an object which is dated archaeologically to the (early) ninth century. The futhark was doubtless included as a key to help decipher this riddle of an inscription – but what help is it?

1



Haddeby stick 2, South Jutland. 12.2 cm. Illustration from Aslak Liestøl. – So much of this stut-rune inscription is immediately intelligible that we can make out that it is a communication, a letter. In the text an attempt is made – with no great success – to discover what the letter-writer had in mind to say.



A



B

2



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– they simply show that they were the work of Swedes (or, later, Norwegians). In the light of current runological knowledge, the balance of probability tilts in favour of the theory that stut-runes were invented in Hedeby, presumably by Swedes (cf. the Elisenhof comb below).

OBJECTS

- *371 *Elisenhof comb*, Kreis Eiderstedt, South Jutland. Dated archaeologically to the end of the ninth century.

ʅ ʁ ɹ – kǫbr, Old Norse *kambr* = comb.

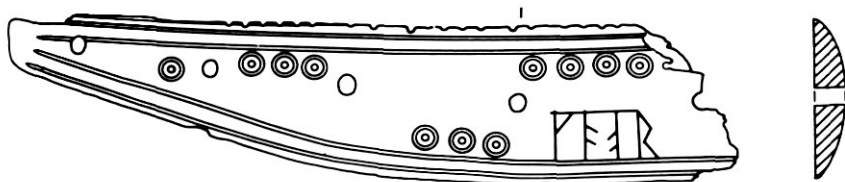
Aslak Liestøl [2] was the first to interpret this and to recognise the runes as stut-runes. As noted earlier, a single word on an object may be the name of the donor, of the writer, of the owner or, as here, of the object itself.

The comb was found during the excavation of a Viking Age settlement at Tønning on the peninsula (originally three separate islands) where the Ejder flows into the North Sea. It is thus the most southerly Viking Age inscription on Danish soil.

- 158 The archaeological dating to the end of the ninth century is not seriously at odds with the spelling kǫbr instead of kǫbr. It is generally thought that after dentals (t, d, cf. Gørlev) ʁ became r in Danish by about 900 but that the change was rather later in other clusters. The change of ʁ to r took place at about the same time in Sweden too, but it had happened a good deal earlier in Norway. Aslak Liestøl (who dealt with the comb in connection with the two Hedeby sticks – see below) was given an archaeological dating in the first half of the ninth century and had no alternative therefore but to conclude that the inscription was by a Norwegian. But if a date at the end of the ninth century is correct – and there is a good deal to suggest it is – we can postulate a Swede instead.

- *371 *Haddeby peg*, South Jutland (ninth century on archaeological evidence):

plua nuta



Eisenhof comb, South Jutland. 10.5 cm. Illustration from Aslak Liestøl. 370
 – It gradually becomes commoner for objects to identify themselves in runes – this one neatly and accurately calls itself “comb”.

Not interpreted. The first “word” is in double-outline runes. Nobody knows what this small object was used for [3].

Haddeby stick 1, South Jutland (ninth century on archaeological evidence): *368

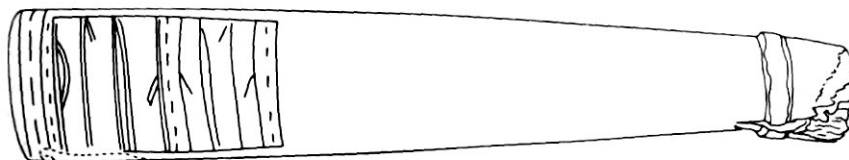
ᚦ safur ᚦ safu ᚦ hinþini ᚦ fiui ᚦ (upside down) : ᚦ faki ᚦ kl ||
 fuþarkhniastbmlr (upside down) : ᚦ kuka ᚦ kuikui ᚦ saar

Not interpreted. Despite the thoughtfulness of the rune-writer in including the futhark – the oldest stut-rune futhark known – as a key to the mysteries of his inscription (it must be in a code), no one has succeeded in making sense of it [4].

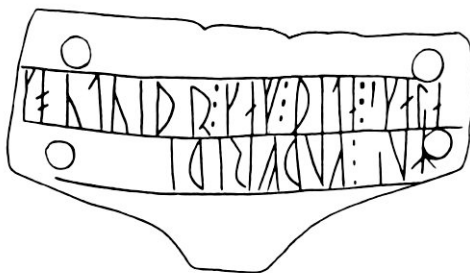
Haddeby stick 2, South Jutland (ninth century on archaeological evidence): *369

raþi · utlfR · utufR · sati · auriki · itarku · in · aurik · salti ·
 utlfī · utur || auþikR · biān · fur · uk · þat · fu : suiarp : ?lt ·
 ul???li : kafipu : at : ualR · akiu : likR : || ... : nu : suiarp : ilt

Haddeby peg, South Jutland. 9.6 cm. Illustration from Aslak Liestøl. 370
 øl. – The stut-rune inscription, *plua nuta*, has not yet been interpreted.



373 Bronze mount from Vä,
Skåne. 3.3 × 1.9 cm.
— In DaRun this inscription
is classed as medie-
val (Period 3), but in
reality it is in stut-
runes and therefore be-
longs to the Viking Age
(Period 2). It says that
Gøtved gave this “house
of scales” — a box to
keep weighing scales in —
to Gudfrid.



No coherent interpretation but, unlike the first stick, it does
contain some words that are immediately intelligible. The
more-or-less contemporary Sparlösa stone in Västergötland
has the expression, “read the runes derived from divine powers”
— which tempts one to read *rapi* here as “read” — but the verb
320 can also mean “to rule, have control over” (cf. the Karlevi
inscription). The man who is to *rapi* is *utlfr*, whose name
occurs twice more: *utufr* (nominative, the next word) and
utlfi (which must be dative). The name is best interpreted
(with Aslak Liestøl) as *Oddulfr* [5].

But when *Oddulfr* has finished doing whatever the verb
rapi requires, he has to do something else expressed by *sati*.
It is doubtless most natural to take this as a verb in the present
subjunctive (like *rapi* and, later on, *salti*). Only the verb *senda*
appears appropriate, and that may team up well with the fol-
lowing dative of a personal name, *Aurikr* or *Eyrikr*. The fol-
lowing *itarku* may be a place-name with prefixed preposition
i, “in” — prepositions are frequently written together with the
words they govern. There is a word *targa*, meaning a kind of
shield, but in our search for sense it hardly seems helpful to
bring it into the discussion.

If in what follows we can bring ourselves to see *aurik* as the
subject (with the nominative ending *-r* omitted), we can piece
the bits together and discover that *Aurik* is to *salta* *utur* for
Oddulv — “salt an otter”? Let us give up these extremely

dubious proceedings and go on to *suiarþ* : *ilt* – which we must agree with *Liestøl* means “a poor sword”.

While so much in the inscription is doubtful or incomprehensible, one thing seems certain: what we have here is a letter, a communication from a man unnamed to another called *Oddulv*, who is to undertake something in association with a third man called *Aurik*. One is disposed to believe that *Oddulv* could understand the message. Why can't we? [6]

One or possibly two Viking Age Swedish inscriptions with stut-runes on objects remain to discuss.

Vä bronze mount, Skåne:

*372

kautuīþr : *kaf* : *þita* : *skala* | *hus* : *kupfriþi*

Gøtved gave this “house of scales” to *Gudfrid*.

The mount must have come from a box containing a small pair of weighing scales. In *DaRun* the inscription is wrongly classed as medieval (Period 3) instead of Viking Age. Even though the branches of the *a*- and *t*-runes cut a little through the stave, they were certainly meant to belong only to the one side (but *t* possibly meant to be *↑* ?); not so in the case of *ā*, on the other hand, which has a form corresponding to that on the *Ravnskilde* stone. The *u*-runes have the characteristic short second stave, and the *þ*-runes are big-bellied.

378

Lund comb 3, Skåne:

*461

iatrink

Probably the English name *Eadrinc* (cf. the English name on the *Århus comb*). The *t*-rune has the Viking Age *↑* form, while the *a*- and *n*-runes have by-staves on one side only (*ⱦ* and *Ɱ*). Allied to the fact that this comb is considered one of the oldest – if not the oldest – of the combs found in *Lund*, these rune forms suggest that the inscription is in stut-runes and in that case must at the latest be from the first half of the eleventh century [7].

361

STONES WITH STUT-RUNE INSCRIPTIONS

188 193ff. *Haddeby stone 2* was discussed above in connection with the almost identical Danish inscription on Haddeby 4, and both were cited as evidence of Hedeby's joint Danish-Swedish nationality. But there are more stones with stut-rune inscriptions and some of them are older than the Haddeby stone. Since, however, we do not know for sure when Norwegians adopted the stut-runes, we cannot at once decide whether the inscriptions now to be considered are Swedish or Norwegian. It is true that some Swedish stut-rune inscriptions can be definitely dated to the early ninth century, while it is doubtful whether any Norwegian inscription in stut-runes is older than the latter half of that century. In these circumstances probability favours classifying the first two inscriptions below, Gundurup 2 and Laurbjerg, as Swedish.

*375 *Gunderup stone 2, North Jutland:*

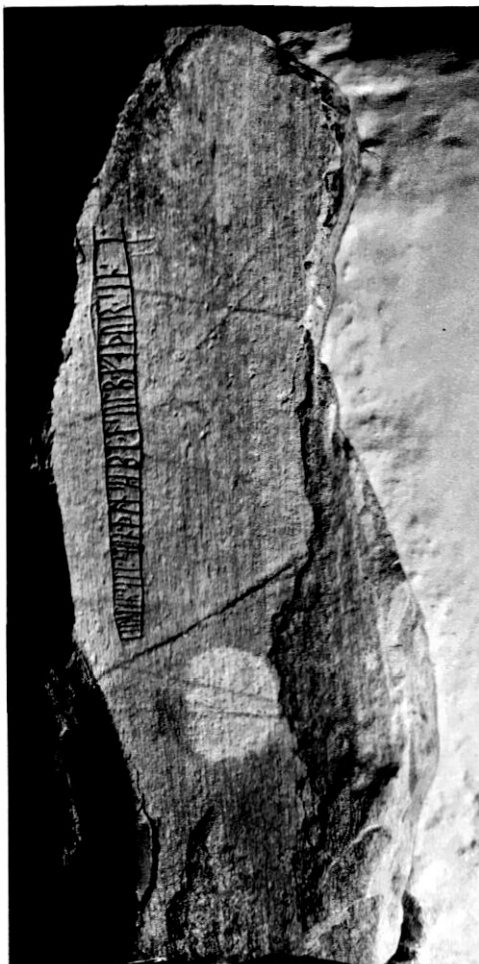
austain sati stain pañsi abt ašulb faḅur sin

Østen placed this stone in memory of Asulv, his father.

The forms *abt* for *aft* and *-ulb* for *-ulf* may be either Swedish or Norwegian, so the language gives no guidance to the carver's nationality. In the two occurrences of the *a*-rune the upper side-stroke starts from the top of the stave, a feature which associates the stone with the early Viking Age *Helnæs-Gørlev* group, whose language is straight Old Danish. The arrangement of the runes in a line along one edge of the upright stone also points to the same early period [8].

But this inscription tempts one to odd speculations. The carver begins – oh, so carefully – with thin, delicate, cramped strokes (using a chisel, not a pick). Gradually, he becomes bolder and hits away more firmly. He did not stop to sketch the runes before cutting them, just the irregular frame-lines in which they were to stand, and then he set to work forthwith. But one feels that his skill belongs in a different sphere – it was not every day that he practised the art his father had taught him – or at least not with stone as the medium.

Gunderup stone 2, North Jutland. 225 cm. Retouched photograph. — An ancient stone with a stut-rune inscription, certainly from the ninth century. The spellings *abt* and *ulb* (for *aft* and *-ulf*) point to Swedish or Norwegian origin. Note the location of the inscription near the edge of the face — an archaic feature (Starup, Øster Løgum), and see how carefully the carver begins — as he grows bolder, so the runes get bigger.



374

*33 *149

From the same period comes the *Laurbjerg stone*, North Jutland:

*376

bulnausanstai(n) || uili

Bolnød's (?) true (?) stone. Ville (carved).

It will be seen that only the *a-* and *n-*runes are from the stut-rune alphabet. The main inscription stands on the narrow side of the stone, while *Ville* (presuming it is a name) is along the edge of the broad face. These four runes are cut rather less deeply than the main message, which is incised with great



Laurbjerg stone, North Jutland. 120 cm. Retouched photograph. — An old stone with stut-runes but probably not as old as Gunderup 2. The inscription on the narrow edge probably says: Bolnød's true stone, while uili on the broad face is a personal name, presumably the carver's. Placing the runes along the edge is an old feature (cf. e.g. Gunderup 2).

195 firmness. If uili is the name of the carver, the stone can be put alongside Haddeby 4, where the carver-formula is incised so lightly that the first investigators failed to notice it at all. If the inscription is correctly read, it corresponds in type to that of the Starup stone. — There are saucer-shaped depressions on the stone.

*33

Elleköping stone, Skåne. 320 cm. Retouched photograph. From Sven B.F. Jansson. — The only stut-rune stone in Skåne, most probably earlier than AD 1000. Billing put up this stone in memory of Skröte.



Elleköping stone, Skåne:

bilikrraistiaftskrautastinþina

Billing set up in memory of Skrøte this stone.

Sven B.F. Jansson dates the stone to “probably the beginning of the eleventh century” [9], but the stut-rune specialist, Ingrid Sanness Johnsen, thinks it must be considerably older – presumably that means from the tenth century [10].

With this we come to the end of proper stut-rune inscriptions in Denmark, but the following have characteristic features which make it natural to review them in association with the rune stones just considered.

- 265 The two Simris stones in Skåne, the Slesvig stone in South
 *331 Jutland, and Bodilsker stone 5 on Bornholm are of Swedish make, as is shown partly by their decoration and partly by their runic and linguistic character. None of them uses a pure stut-rune futhark. Simris 2 has Danish runes throughout except ‡ for ą. The Slesvig stone has the stroke through the stave in a (†) but only on one side in n (†); t has the Danish form (†).
 328 The Swedish influence on Bornholm was discussed above.

- *379 *Ravnkilde stone 1*, North Jutland:
 ąsurlat : hirþir : | kukis : sun : raist | runarþasi | ataþbuþtrunik
 Asser the factor (“land-steward”), Køge’s (?) son, cut these runes in memory of Asbod (his) lady.

Here too we meet the ą-rune observed on Simris 2, only it now has the form ‡. At the same time, the carver writes runar (not runar, as a Dane would have spelt it). The stone is very worn – but even so it is clear enough that we are dealing with a pretty feeble carver. Even when pristine, the runes must have been ungainly and ill-favoured – and he left out t before n in trutnik and very probably the word sina (= his) to qualify “lady”.

Traces of Swedish or Norwegian influence – probably the latter in view of the stone’s location – are found on this stone from Vendsyssel:

- *305 *Jetsmark stone*, North Jutland:
 hufi | sati | stin | ift | bruþr | sinapurlakauk | hriþi
 Hove placed the stone in memory of his brothers, Thorlak and Ride (with initial h before r, common in Norwegian and Swedish inscriptions till a comparatively late date; note ‡ for ą).

- *198 380 Three stones remain, *Sønder Vissing 1* and *Hobro 2* in North
 380 Jutland, and *Sturkö* in Blekinge, which are distinctive because they use the ʁ rune for e/æ (usually transliterated E) [11].

Ravnkilde stone 1, North Jutland. 140 cm. Retouched photograph. — Asser the “land-steward” (cf. Egå), son of Køge or Kugge, cut these runes in memory of Asbod (his) lady. This unattractive inscription was certainly the work of one of our blunderers, who could not read and only just about copy what was written.



378

*186

Otherwise λ is only known at this time in the Danish futhark, where it represents r . This usage for $e/\text{æ}$ is found however in getting on for ten Västergötland inscriptions, so it is presumed to be Swedish and therefore a Swedish element in these three remaining Danish stones. Let us first see how an r -rune suddenly acquires the value $e/\text{æ}$. λ is the only rune in the Viking Age alphabet which did not have an acrophonic name, i.e. the only one whose name did not begin with the sound it stood for. We do not know its name in the Primitive Norse futhark — only that it originally represented a voiced s -sound. Two Viking Age names are known for it, $\acute{y}r$ and $elgr$; and then the same thing happened with this rune as with the old ſ -rune in Anglo-Saxon inscriptions. In the Old English futhorc it represented ih , eoh — but in the inscriptions it was given a double function, standing both for its initial (i) and for its final sound (h) [12]. In the case of the λ rune, the “authorised” value r was retained, but a second value was attributed to it, that of its initial sound, e .

There is no doubt that the Hobro stone is associated with the Västergötland stones – it has an authentic twin in precisely that province:

*381 *Hobro stone 2*, North Jutland:

: þurir : risþi : stin : þaasi : aufti : karl : hin : kuþaa : felaka :
sin : harþ | a : kuþaan : trek :

Thore set up this stone in memory of Karl the good, his partner, a very noble “dreng”.

333 *Ås stone*, Västergötland:

þuri : risþi : stn : þansi : efti : karl : sin : fe : la(ka) : (h)rpa :
kuþan : (t)rek .

Thore set up this stone in memory of Karl, his partner, a very noble “dreng”.

One may imagine that Thore and Karl (the only instance of this name on a Danish rune stone) had been together in Denmark, where Karl died. Thore had a stone put up in his memory at or near the place of Karl’s death; and later, on his return to
219 Västergötland, he followed local custom (cf. Valleberga) and set up a cenotaph to the honour of his dead friend. There thus seems every reason to regard $\lambda = e$ on the Hobro stone as a Swedicism, or more precisely, a Västgöticism.

It will not seem so easy to reach a decision on the remote Sturkö stone in Blekinge. Its fragmentary state makes it difficult to judge its age in relation to the Västergötland stones [13].

Sturkö stone, Blekinge:

skibare : kuþis : raisþ ... stin

Gude’s shipmate set up NN’s stone.

Neither Hobro nor the Västergötland stones can be dated at all plausibly to before about AD 1000 – one of the latter group has the o-rune, which is a very late feature – but the Sønder
*198 Vissing stone can be, for it was put up by Harald Blacktooth’s



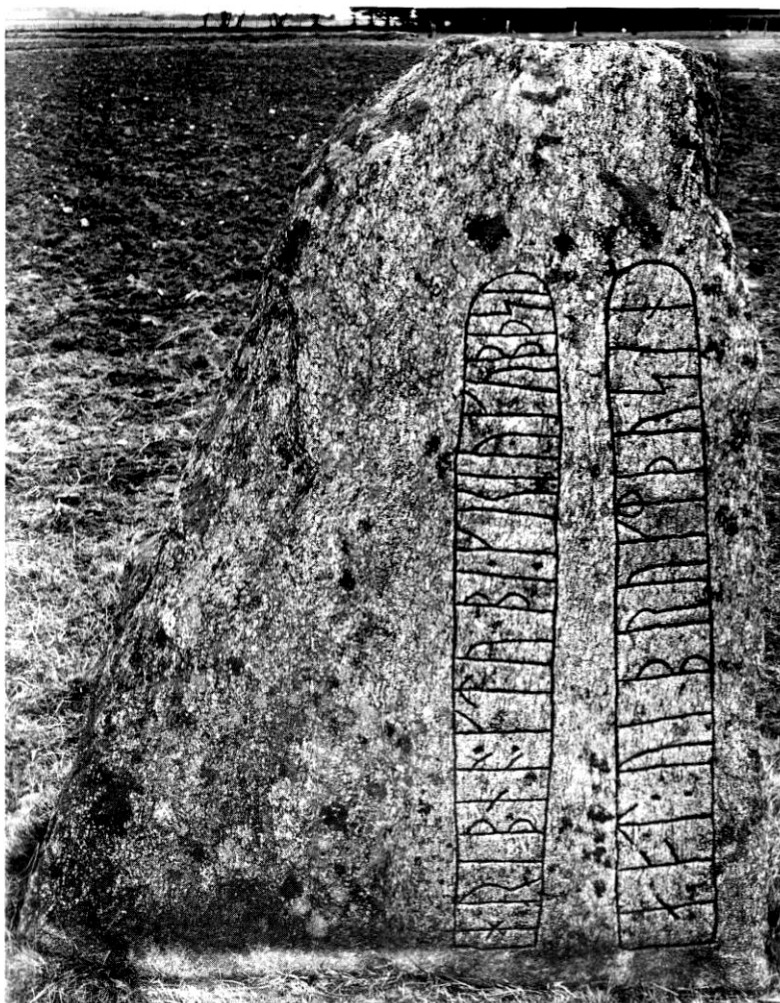
Hobro stone 2, North Jutland. 150 cm. — The Thore who cut (or commissioned) the inscription on this Hobro stone in memory of his partner, “Karl the good” — a very noble “dreng” — put up another stone with an almost identical legend at Ås in Västergötland. The Hobro inscription displays a number of Swedish characteristics. Note the marks of the pick-hammer in the broad lines of the runes.

wife in memory of her mother. Having reigned for some fifty years Harald was no chicken when he died about 987. His mother-in-law had presumably died a good while before that, especially if she was the first mother-in-law he had. This means that in all probability we may date the Sönder Vissing stone to c. 975 at the latest, while recognising that it could be as much as 25 years older. The one example of $\lambda = \epsilon$ in the inscription cannot then be the result of influence from Västergötland. The problem is probably best solved like this: at some time and at some place in Denmark, before or during Harald Blacktooth's reign (but not later), there was a man — whether Danish or Swedish is more than we can say — who was keen on introducing a small alphabet reform, which would make the R-rune acrophonic in the same way as all the other runes were.

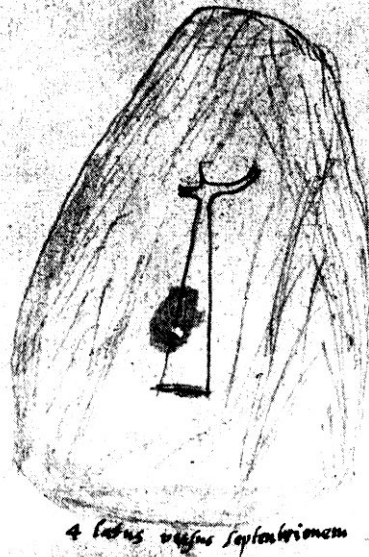
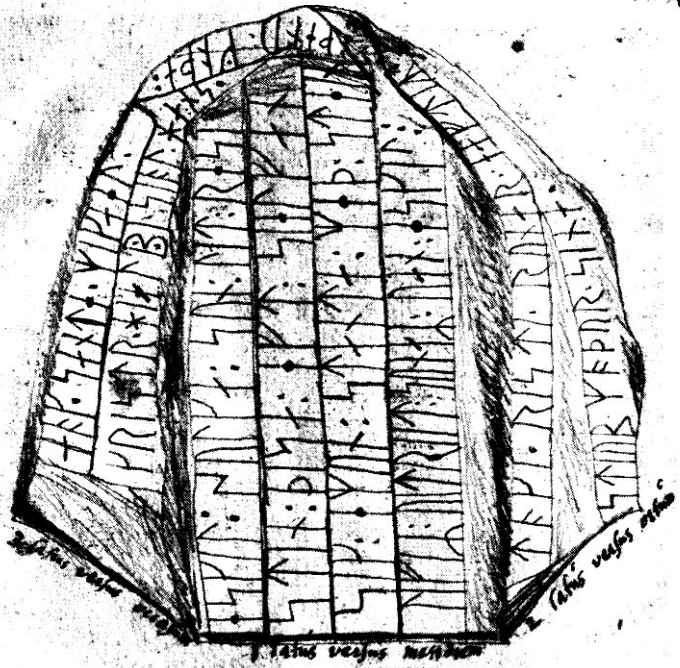
379

- 386 Bække monument, North Jutland. After excavation and restoration in 1957. — The ship-setting is 45 m. long. All the stones had their flat faces turned inboard; the lower stones were in the middle, the taller at the ends; and the stone at the stem, the rune stone, was tallest of all. (See O. Voss, Skalk 1957.) Midships or thereabouts lay an empty (robbed?) grave. The rune stone is the one farthest right in the picture. Aerial photograph by Stiesdal-Voss 1958.





Bække stone 2, North Jutland. 125 cm. Retouched photograph. — This 386
stone was set up in association with a mound and a ship-setting. It has a
notable inscription which cannot be made Danish, however one reads it.
The name of the man who set it up, *hribna*, *Hrefna*, with *hr* preserved
initially, suggests Norwegian origin, but there are so many abbreviations
and contractions elsewhere in the inscription that one cannot be certain
that this name too is not foreshortened. We are reminded most strongly
of the abbreviated forms we meet in Sweden and later on Bornholm
(see e.g. *Rø*). The intention of the inscription was however to announce 319
that one or perhaps two people had made a monument in memory of
Viborg, their mother. The short form *aft* indicates the Jelling period.



388 Tillitse stone, Lolland. Jon Skonvig's sketches from the beginning of the seventeenth century.



Tillitse stone, Lolland. 140 cm. Retouched photograph of the front face. — The inscription here announces that Eskil son of Sulke had the stone put up in memory of himself in the hope that, as long as the stone survived, this emblazing — this spread of runes — which Eskil made would always stand. 388

His reform may not have had monumental success — as the scarcity of $\text{A} = \text{E}$ on the rune stones suggests — but nevertheless the very fact that the examples are so scattered in time and

place is some evidence of its “everyday” existence – in the correspondence of that age, like the letter we have just met on Haddeby stick 2.

A few other stones show signs of a wider “Scandinavian” influence, though not in the rune forms themselves. Two may be cited:

*382 *383 *Bække stone 2*, North Jutland:
 hribnā : ktubi : kriukubpsi | aft : uibrukmpusin
 Revne (?) ... in memory of Viborg, his mother.

The inscription is most reminiscent of those curtly abbreviated Swedish forms, derivatives of which we met on Bornholm; it is at any rate not like Norwegian practice. Not even the name of the man who put up the stone can be regarded as quite certain (possibly a compound with *-evne* as the second element?). There is also no way of deciding whether *tubi* is to be read as the name of another man associated with the erection of the stone, or whether (with Wimmer) we should interpret *ktubi* as *kat urbin*, *gat orpinn*, “had built”. What he had built was *kriukub*, i.e. *kriutkubl*, *griotku(m)bl*, this “stone-monument”; but an alternative reading proposes *kiripu kubl*, “(they) made this monument”. Earlier the stone stood at the end of a long row of stones which started from a mound, and a 1956 excavation showed that these stones were the remains of a ship-setting [14]. But would the ON *verpa* (past participle *orpinn*) be used of building such a monument – it means to throw or pile (up) and can be used of making a mound but hardly of creating a whole monument such as this? On the other hand, the form *kiripu* is rather suspect as a reconstruction of *kriu*. Perhaps a closer study of the “abbreviated” inscriptions will reveal some method in their madness.

388 The Tillitse stone on Lolland is of about the same age as the Bornholm stones. In company with the pure Swedish *Simris 1*, it is the only inscription in the rest of Denmark to use the *o*-rune. It is also the only stone in Denmark known to have been put up by a man in memory of himself – a custom common enough in Sweden. We may thus safely assume that the Tillitse stone is the work of a Swede – perhaps a descendant of Swedes



Tillitse stone, Lolland. Retouched photograph of faces D-B. — Face B contains a prayer for Eskil's soul. Note that the e-rune in migael has been erroneously painted in as an o-rune. Side C (not reproduced) tells us that Toke cut runes in memory of Thora, his step-mother, a "noble" woman. This is the only rune stone in Denmark that was re-used. Grave-stones, on the other hand, were very commonly used more than once, though not before the twelfth and thirteenth century. 388

who, on their way to Hedeby, lingered on Lolland – as we have already seen, the Tirsted and Sædinge stones bear witness to the existence of a Swedish colony there. Another thing that makes the Tillitse stone unique in the Danish context is that it was re-used – a practice attested in Sweden (and Norway) but not otherwise in Denmark, though common enough in the case of gravestones later on.

*384 *385 *Tillitse stone*, Lolland:

eskil : sulka : sun : let : res[a] | sten : þena : eft : sialfan | sik ·
 emun · stanta · meb · sten | lifir · uitrint · su · iar · uan · eskil
 || kristr · hialbi · siol · hans | aok · santa · migael || toki · risti ·
 runar · e(ftir) [-þ](o)ru · | stiubmopur · sina · kunu · koþa

I. Eskil Sulke's son had this stone set up in memory of himself.

Ever will stand
 while the stone lives,
 this emblazing
 which Eskil made.

Christ help his soul and Saint Michael.

II. Toke cut the runes in memory of Thora, his stepmother, a woman noble.

Swedish influence is less pronounced on

Sandby stone 3, Sjælland:

sylfa : rest [12–13 runes] i : sbalklusu : eyft(i) : susur : faþur
 [c. 5 runes] (r)þi : bru : þisi : iki : | þurils : brþur : sin : ||
 imun · san [up to 10 runes] if : uitrik : susi : ir : uan : sil...
 Sølve set up ... in Spalkløse (i.e. Spragelse) in memory of Su-
 ser, [his] father, [and ma]de this bridge (or causeway) (in
 memory of) Thorgils, his brother.

Ever will s[t]an[d]

...

this emblazing
 which Søl[ve] (?) made.

Tillitse and Sandby belong to a time, after c. 1025, when the rune-stone fashion was past in Denmark and was about to establish itself on Bornholm.

NOTES

- 1 Aslak Liestøl, *Berichte über die Ausgrabungen in Haithaby* 6, p. 97f. – *Michigan Germanic Studies* VII, no 1, 1981, pp. 107 ff. – *Saga-Book of the Viking Society* XX, 4, 1981, pp. 247 ff. In the last two of these papers Liestøl argues that the stut-rune futhark was the model for the Danish 16-rune futhark. The latter is in reality the older alphabet but it was “reorganized and somewhat modernised under the influence of the short-twig alphabet”. Apart from the problems this causes in explaining the form of the h-rune in the stut-rune series, the theory also violates the laws of alphabet history, which require transition from the complex to the simple, from the irregular to the regular (cf. the Greek alphabet reform of 403 BC, p. 45 above). Liestøl also has to assume unconvincing substitutions, misunderstandings and lapses of memory on the part of the futhark creators.
- 2 Aslak Liestøl, *Berichte*, pp. 114 ff., 105. Cf. Klaus Düwel and Wolf-Dieter Tempel, *Knochenkämme mit Runeninschriften aus Friesland. Mit einer Zusammenstellung aller bekannten Runenkämme und einem Beitrag zu den friesischen Runeninschriften*. *Palaeohistoria* XIV, 1968, pp. 353, 374 (“Ende 10. Jh.” an error for “Ende 9. Jh.”). Ingrid Sanness Johnsen writes to me on the subject of *Elisenhof*: “I favour Aslak Liestøl’s view of it as most probably Norwegian. The form b (my group C – viz. in her book, *Stuttruner*) is especially to be found in Norway and the west.”
- 3 See Aslak Liestøl, *Berichte* 6 p. 104.
- 4 *ibid.*, pp. 106 ff.
- 5 *ibid.*, pp. 97 ff.
- 6 A complete but extremely fanciful explanation is given by Aage Kabbell in *Arkiv f. nord. Fil.* 1977.
- 7 E. Moltke, *Festskrift til Marsén*, hikuin 2, 1975, p. 147.
- 8 K.M. Nielsen attempts to explain away the significance of the old ansur-rune but his argument is insecurely based, see *Acta Phil. Scand.* 18, 1945, pp. 299 ff.
- 9 *HistT Skåneland* 3, 1965, p. 6.
- 10 Ingrid Sanness Johnsen, *Stuttruner*, 1968, p. 166 f.
- 11 Cf. K.M. Nielsen, *Acta Phil. Scand.* 18, 1945, pp. 293 ff. *Arkiv f. nord. Fil.* 1970, pp. 64 ff.
- 12 Cf. Ingrid Sanness Johnsen, *Arkiv f. nord. Fil.* 89, 1974, p. 40.
- 13 In *Acta Phil. Scand.* 1957, p. 47, Harry Andersen says of E in *skibarE* that from a methodological point of view it is a question of “explaining away” this discrepant form, which creates an unpleasant disturbance in our phonological history. A better way of putting it would be just the reverse: from a methodological point of view, it is a question of finding a phonological explanation which can take proper account of this form in the written language. Cf. the numerous

attempts over the years to “explain away” the Gorlev stone’s rispi
stin for raispi stain. — Other instances of “explaining away” are
found in the same paper, p. 52.

14 Skalk 1957, nr 1, pp. 5 ff.; nr 4, p. 27f.



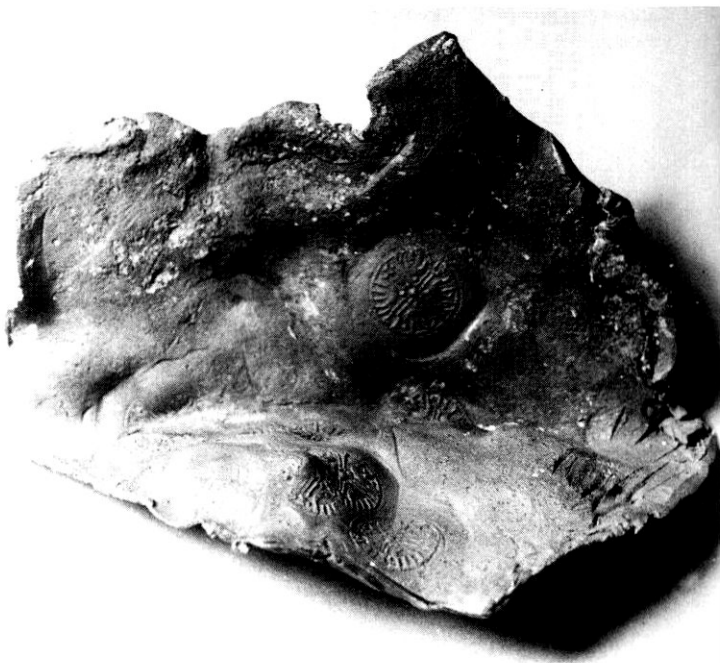
Farewell to Period 2

Sven Estridsson's runic coins [1]

If one may believe the numismatists [2], it was in the last ten years of his reign, c. 1065–1075, that Sven Estridsson had coins minted with runic lettering on them, chiefly in Lund. Some, it seems, were struck in Roskilde, and a couple of isolated issues were minted at Borgeby in Skåne and Slagelse on Sjælland.

As we saw above, we must assume that the rune-stone fashion ended in Denmark, both east and west of Øresund,

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Coin trial-piece, Lund, Skåne. Lead, c. 14 cm long, weight 367 g. The stamp is of one of Sven Estridsson's runic coins (Hauberg type 32a) issued early in the 1070s. The inscription reads: + fati : ilunti, Fatte in Lund. We have a number of coins minted by Fatte, but none from the same die as this specimen. Coins were minted by striking the upper die (cut with the reverse) down onto the obverse die fixed underneath it, with the coin blank between them. The piece is in the Kulturhistoriska Museet at Lund, where it was discovered in 1982 among objects recovered from older excavations in the town. Photo: Lennart Larsen.

around 1025, in the time of Knud the Great. Then the custom of burying the dead in the consecrated ground of the churchyard superseded the old practice of laying them to rest in mounds or private graves. There were certainly not a great many grave-mounds built after the Jelling monuments were finished. On Bornholm, where the rune-stone custom only began about 1050, they perhaps went on putting up memorial rune stones until towards 1100, even though the dead were



Sven Estridsson's runic coins. Following P. Hauberg in *Myntforhold og Udmyntninger i Danmark indtil 1146*, we divide King Sven's runic coins into seven types. Types 30, 31 and 32a were struck in Lund (Skåne), 33 in Borgeby (Skåne), 39 and 39a in Roskilde and 52 in Slagelse (Sjælland). The coins are 1.5–2 cm in diameter and average about 1 gram in weight (some heavier, some lighter). The enlarged photograph on p. 391 shows the obverse of an Asser coin, type 32a. The reverse is seen top left above with the legend: ✠ ʁ T ʁ ʁ : (ʁ) ʁ ʁ | ʁ | | | — i.e. *atsor : (l)ukikiii* = *Atsor in Lund*. The reverse of a Thorkil Rek coin, type 30, is seen top right above, while the two lower illustrations show the obverse and reverse of the Roskilde type 39, with *H N | ʁ | R E ʁ | T ʁ | ʁ | ʁ* — *suea rex tnnoim*, i.e. *sven rex danorum*, *Sven king of the Danes*.

actually buried at the church (cf. the Valleberga stone, Skåne).

219

But with or without stones, runes lived on in rude health and did so for at least two hundred years after Sven Estrids-

son's death. This will clearly emerge in the next section, Period 3, the middle ages. We then find runes carved in church masonry, scratched in wet plaster on church walls, cut, engraved or cast on all kinds of church furnishings. About 1200 or a little before Archbishop Absalon used them when he had a rune
404 played in building the church at Norra Åsum in Skåne; and
446 about 1300 Bishop Giske of Odense perhaps cut his own
417 name in runes in the lead of a reliquary. A runic gravestone in Blekinge is dated 1310 or 1311.

Runes seem to have continued to flourish particularly among craftsmen – the archaeologist's spade has not yet turned up a merchant community in Denmark to compare with that of Bryggen in Bergen, Norway. Carpenters fitting church rooves, plasterers daubing church walls, brass founders casting censers and bells – and so on – all left their marks in runes. But monks cultivated runic writing as well, though not always precisely for Christian purposes – as the amulets from
490 Æbelholt monastery show, for example. It must have needed a thoroughly well-educated cleric to produce a charm of such
493 exemplary pattern as the one on the Ribe healing-stick.

When Sven Estridsson chose the ancestral script (with some admixture of roman letters) for a number of coins struck in the last years of his reign, he was not breathing life into a dead alphabet but simply employing a genuinely popular form of script. Latin letters, like the Latin language, belonged to churchmen. We cannot get to the bottom of the king's motives: but are we likely to be wrong in detecting a liberal dash of nationalism and an equal measure of love of antiquity among them? Or was he anxious to see to it that runes were not forgotten in certain classes of society in his kingdom? Probably we may look for similar causes to account for the uncommonly fine runic manuscript of the Scanian laws two hundred years later.

The runes the moneyers were instructed to use were based on the Viking Age futhark: a, n and t still have the forms ᚠ, ᚢ and ᚦ, not the medieval ᚠ, ᚢ, ᚦ, but the nasalised ᚠ-rune ᚢ now has the form ᚠ or ᚢ and stands for o (as in Norway, Sweden and Bornholm) – a loan from the stut-runes. Dotted

runes have multiplied: to Sven Forkbeard's † e , ƿ g and A y are added þ p and some d-forms (dotted t-runes) ᚛ , ᚠ and ᚦ – typical runes for writers using quill on vellum or a fine point on metal but not practical for the stone-carver. On coin type 39 (Roskilde) ᚦ is also used for x (in the word rex, king).

A single coin sticks to the traditional in keeping the R -rune ᚱ (6 alfer), and diphthongs are found *written*, e.g. in the names Meinolf, Stein and Svein (the last written SVEN when roman letters are used); ou occurs in Ouphern. They are *scribal* diphthongs with no basis in the spoken language of the time. Svein called himself Sven and his friends called him Sven too.

His friends – they were the mint-masters, the craftsmen who struck the coins and whose names guaranteed their face-value (tiny little things they are, wafer-thin, about the size of an English halfpenny piece, an American dime, a Danish tenöre). As the names show, many of the mint-masters came from England: *sumarliþi on lundi* – Sommerlede in Lund – is the signature of a moneyer with a pure English name who kept his English preposition, “on”. Godwine, Lefsi, Meinolf and others were also English. These English minters understood as little about runes as the Danes they were perhaps supposed to instruct in their art. This is clearly apparent from their curious errors – not very different from those we found on the bracteates – errors like Y for ᚠ , V for ᚱ , which cannot be explained merely by the fact that runes had to be cut as mirror images in the die.

In his still useful book from 1900, *Myntforhold og Udmyntninger i Danmark indtil 1146*, P. Hauberg divided runic coins into seven types. Type 30 (Lund) has on the obverse an enthroned Christ without sceptre surrounded by MAGNUS REX (Sven Estridsson had Magnus, his Christian name, as a cognomen), and on the reverse a central cross with the name of the moneyer and the place of the mint around it.

The runic inscriptions naturally contribute little to our linguistic knowledge but we get to know a host of names. What we cannot tell is whether these “Danish” names belonged to native Danes or to workers imported from the Danelaw in England.

A selection from DaRun will give an idea of what these coin inscriptions look like.

Coin 1, type 30: ailmer : rlfiedi : ailme : – Ailmer (or Almer) Ulfjet (in roman letters he writes the name Wulfjet).

Coin 19, type 30: asur pai i lundī – Asser Peacock in Lund.

Coin 47c, type 30: kali : i : lundī : liimī – Kalle in Lund; the m-rune has a clear dot in the main stave and must therefore be a “reversed” t.

Coin 70, type 31: seuine : ilutþþ – Sevine in Lund; þ is a mirror image.

Coin 82, type 30: suartabrat i Lundī – Svartebrand in Lund. Either this mint-master knew runes himself or he had an excellent model to follow: he leaves out n before t in the good old traditional way.

Coin 88, type 32a: suein : selani – Sven Selanus (i.e. of Sjælland) – did the moneyer know Latin?

Coin 94, type 52, Slagelse: þiakr · i ☉ inmi ☉ i · li ☉ r ☉ – Thiagn (?) Thegn? ?????

Coin 113, type 39a, Roskilde (?): þorþ (a) mi(k) – Thord owns(?) me (scil. the die). This interpretation is merely a conjecture because the very many extant examples of type 39a only contain very corrupt legends, e.g. þor : þ · l mī.

Coin 116, type 30: ulf lit(la) on lutī – Ulv the Little in Lund.

Coin 90, type 39, Roskilde (?): suen rex tanorum – Sven king of the Danes. This is the basic type 39, which is known in even more specimens than type 39a – but the legends are seldom reproduced accurately, e.g. suen rEx tanorum, suen rEx tanoim.

More runic coins have been discovered since DaRun was published but no new mint-masters have come to light. Those we know are as follows:

Ailmer, Alvger, Alfrik, Almer, Arkil, Asfard, Asmund, Asmod, Asser, Asser Peacock, Asser the Jute, Åver, Björn, ?Boin, Bose, Bove, Brunman, Esbern, –brand, Fate, ?Godben, Godrik, Godvine, Grimkil, Kal(l)e, ?Kark, Karl, Kæld, Lefsi, Levvine, Manne, Meinolf, Norman, Oudbern, Peter, Petrus, ?Sarþa, Segrin, Sevine, Sigvard, Skagle, Sommerlede, Sten, ?Sturkr, Styrkar, Svava, Svartebrand, Sven, Sven of Sjælland (selanus),

S...kel, Tole, ?piakr, ?pokr, Thorgot, Thorkil, Thorsten, Thord, Uben, Uffe or Uve, Ulv the Little, Ulfjet, Ulkil, ?uma?ut, ?uokil.

NOTES

- 1 E. Moltke, De danske runemønter og deres prægere, Nordisk numismatisk årsskrift 1950. – Cf. Jørgen Steen Jensen, Numismatisk opslagsbog. Mønter fra vikingetid til vor tid, 1974.
- 2 Cf. Kirsten Bendixen, Danmarks mønt. Nationalmuseet, 1967, p. 25.

Period 3. The Middle Ages

From c. 1075 to c. 1300-1350. Early Middle Danish

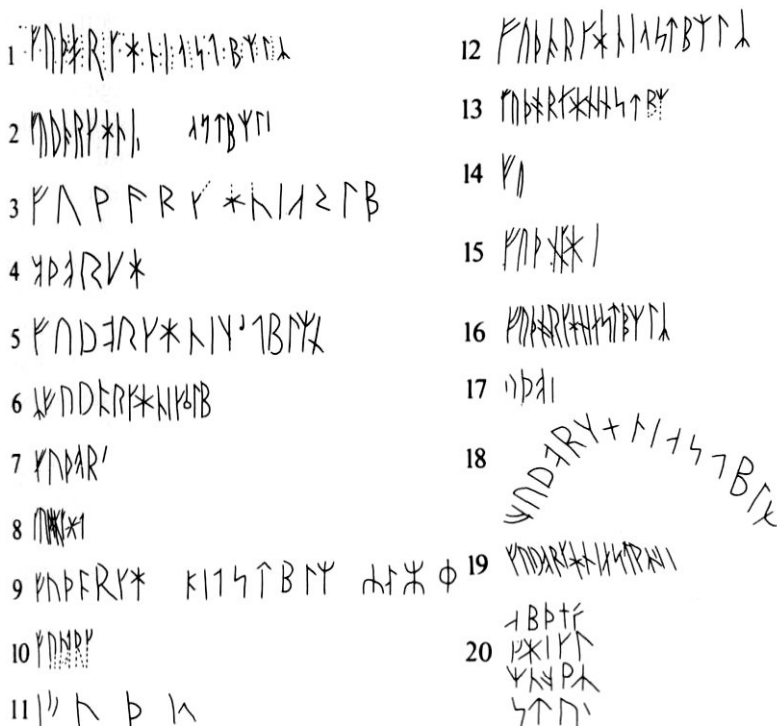
In the preceding sections we have discussed the origins of runes, Period 1, the “long word” period, and Period 2, when *hlewa* became *læ* and *gastiz* became *gæst*. This Viking Age language, which we have called Old Danish, is the language of the rune stones, centred on Jelling, the great nub. That period ends with the stones of Bornholm and the coins of Sven Estridsson.

Now we are in Period 3, the Middle Ages, and we can call the language (early) Middle Danish. The simplifications continue, inflexions wither away still more.

Denmark's greatest runological misfortune is that the wooden stave-churches, the monuments of our first age of church-building, have almost totally vanished. If we had just a dozen of them still standing, we could trace with precision the development of runes (and churches) in the country: for we may be certain that ours were like the Norwegian stave-churches, liberally sprinkled with runic inscriptions and with incised decorative motifs and animal pictures. The plaster walls of our romanesque churches at Tornby, Asmindrup, Stoby and elsewhere, together with the bones from Lund, give us some idea of what we have lost, and suggest why we are bound to be so uncertain in dating the “transitional” stones discussed below. We lack the perspective which the Norwegian scholar is given by his surviving stave-churches.

STANDING RUNE STONES

Some stones marked the transition from Period 1 to Period 2, and similarly we have two stones typical of the transition between Period 2 and Period 3. One is at Oddum, the other at Hanning, both in Ringkøbing county – the district with more square miles and fewer runes than any other county in Jutland.



Medieval runic alphabets from ancient Danish territory. South Jutland: 1. Slesvig bone piece 5. 2. Slesvig bone piece 7. – North Jutland: 3. Åstrup window stone. 4. Om brick. 5. Monsted window stone. 6. Monsted ashlar. 7. Astrup brick. 8. Vejby brick. – Sjælland: 9. Bårse font. 10. Æbelholt brick. 11. Tømmerup cup. – Skåne: 12. Lund bone piece 2. 13. Lund bone piece 6. 14. Lund bone piece 7. 15. Lund bone piece 10. 16. Lund bone piece 12. 17. Lund brick. – Blekinge: 18. Åryd stone. – Bornholm: 19. Nyker plaster inscription. 20 Oster Marie alphabet stone (post-medieval). Drawings by Thora Fisker. For later finds with runic alphabets or partial futhorks, see pp. 459ff.

Oddum stone, North Jutland:

purulfs · sati · stain · uftir · tuka · tuka · sun | hin · usta ·
kub · hialbi | hans ·

Thorulv placed the stone in memory of Toke Toke's son the best (or the youngest). God help his (there was no room for the word "soul").

The contents of the inscription would give no grounds for dating this stone later, say, than those at Grensten and Hørning and on Bornholm. We recognise the Viking Age *a*- and *n*-forms (𐌶 and 𐌿, the latter though tending towards the younger 𐌿 form); a diphthong is *written* in stain, and 𐌶 𐌹 is correctly used in *uftir*; omission of “this” (*þansi*) with stain is easily paralleled on Bornholm stones. No weight can be attached to the false ending -s in the name of the man who set up the stone – it was obviously due to the influence of the following initial *s* in *sati* (nevertheless, it does show that Thorulv had lost his nominative marker, -r). A similar kind of error crops up on the Grensten stone just mentioned. It has *aiftir* *rifla*, where the final *𐌹* is repeated as the initial of the proper name quite contrary to established convention (we see however that the writer did not distinguish *r* and 𐌹 in pronunciation).

But if the Oddum stone belongs to Period 2, it must be



Oddum stone, North Jutland. 110 cm. Retouched photograph. — A stone in Jelling style but a Jelling style that makes one very suspicious of a Jelling date — as do the rune forms too. Note the little serif-like strokes at the ends of the staves — that is a trick the carver must have learnt from roman capitals. The suspect elements in the ornament are discussed in the text.

Hanning stone, North Jutland. Reshaped to make a church ashlar, 107 × 47 cm. Retouched photograph. — Not a stone of great antiquity, with a mixture of old and young rune forms, put up by V. in memory of his mother, Gyde. We cannot tell for certain which way up the stone originally stood. The long-handled hammer was identified as a Thor's hammer in DaRun — but on a twelfth-century stone that seems dubious, and it is most likely a blacksmith's tool.



counted decidedly odd that the division mark varies between a short vertical stroke (such as was used on the oldest rune stones) and a single dot.

If we turn to the ornament, we find a handsome example of Jelling style, with spirals that even here have the obligatory short parallel connecting lines, along with what is presumably some kind of lily at the top. The trouble is that the decoration is too ornate and shows details that do not belong to the style — the short free dash between the parallel connecting lines and the arcs which finish off the framelines at the bottom. One might best characterise this ornament by saying that it resembles Viking Age ornament in about the same way as a “neo-Jacobean” chest from 1920 resembles a genuine one

from 1620. Everything is there, but somehow it is not quite in place. And a date considerably later than the Viking Age is confirmed by a glance at the individual runes: almost all of them have small cross strokes at the end of the staves, like the serifs on many of our type-faces: it is a trick the carver has learnt from Latin capitals. The stone must be medieval – or perhaps even later than that.

*401 *Hanning stone*, North Jutland:

ua?? : tofa : su(n) | rsþi : sten : þene × | eftir : gyþu : moþ[u?]r :
sina × [hammer] (×) | (e)??kil : h...

V(agn?), Tue's son, set up this stone in memory of Gyde, his mother. ...kil h[ewed the runes].

The runes are a mixed bag: Viking Age a and n (with the oblique stroke through the stave) are there, but the t-rune has both the Viking Age and the medieval form, ᚛ and ᚠ; the o-rune also has two forms, ᚢ and ᚦ, the g-rune has its dot in the middle of the stave, not in the crook of the k-rune (cf. the Sale tombstone), and the diagonals of the h-rune end in big round depressions, as do the lines of the large cross that comes after sina. The last-mentioned runes are late features, their novelty emphasized by the form eftir (not eftir). Apart from ᚦ for o and g with the dot in the stave, these characteristics can all be paralleled on Bornholm stones – but there they seem to belong, not in Jutland. The rune forms for o and g must put the stone in the medieval period – but where in that period nobody knows, for the stone has been cut square to make an ashlar. We cannot tell for sure which is top and which is bottom.

If this stone is to be dated about 1200 – whether before or after – identification of the long-shafted hammer as Thor's weapon must be suspect. It is more likely that the carver introduced it as a mark of Vagn's (?) respected status as a craftsman – say a blacksmith, whose chief tool it was – an authentic medieval touch [1].

A third Jutland stone once announced that it had been set up, but we know it only from drawings. It was at Gudum in North Jutland.



Getinge stone, Halland. 166 cm. Retouched photograph. — The inscription says this stone was set up, but in this picture from 1930 it is seen on its side in the church wall. It is now sited in the porch. Its primitive decoration, including the triquetra known to us from the Jelling and Tirsted stones, is what chiefly holds our interest. The dragon (it is *not* a dachshund) must represent Evil, the other symbols the opposite. 403

*270

*270

†*Gudum stone*, North Jutland:

ysten : let : resa : sten : þena : for (:) siol × upuakins : faþur :
sins ×

Østen had this stone set up for the soul of Utvagen, his father.

The name *Upwagin* — literally “unwashed” — is also known in Swedish runic sources and in West Norse as well; in the Lund Liber Daticus it is latinised as *Illotus*. Naturally, the name does not mean that its owner was a grubby chap, but it might ultimately depend on some particular association — perhaps one of his ancestors had an aversion to water.

The square-cut *Getinge stone* in Halland also says it was raised. On the badly damaged front face the inscription announces rantr lit ræisa stain (note ʀ = a, ʁ = æ) — Rand had the stone set up — while on the back æinar tells the world that he cut the runes. The stone is interesting because of its primitive pictorial elements — among them we discover the *triquetra*, known to us from the big Jelling stone and the Tirsted stone.

All four stones mentioned so far were found in close association with churches and churchyards: probably they all originally stood within church bounds.

Two further standing stones should be mentioned, neither of them gravestones, but one of them perhaps the most im-

portant of all our medieval specimens: a “historical” church-builder’s stone.

- *405 *Norra Åsum stone, Skåne:*
+ krist : mario : sun : hiapi : þem : ær : kirku : þe..[: g]erþ(o) :
absalon : ærki : biskup : ok : æsbiornmuli :
Christ, Mary’s son, help those who made this church, Archbishop Absalon and Esbern Mule. (Esbern’s nickname means “snout” or “muzzle”).

There is no need to follow Wimmer in presuming that the two men were dead when the stone was put up – on the contrary, there is every reason to suppose that they saw to the erection of the stone themselves and commissioned the pious hope it expresses – to remind Our Lord that, in return for the church they had given him, he might give them a little “help” later on. Absalon became archbishop in 1178 and died in 1201, and Esbern Mule, mentioned in Absalon’s will, died before 1215. Modern historians suggest that Esbern is identical with Absalon’s brother, Esbern Snare, who died in 1204 [1a]. The limits thus given are 1178 and 1201, but naturally the church could have been built a little before the first of these years – a church worthy of two great men, with a giant of a west tower, of ample girth and five storeys.

The other stone records an undertaking that was looked on as sanctified, not only because it smoothed the benefactor’s way in the next world but also because it constituted a very useful improvement in this world as well. To build a causeway, ford or bridge was pleasing to God and beneficial to man.

- *406 *Fjenneslev stone, Sjælland:*
+ : sasur : risþi : stin : an : karþi : bru
Sasser set up the stone and made the bridge.

The inscription has preserved the Viking Age a- and n-forms, with the oblique stroke through the stave, and t has the form \uparrow . In terms of runic script, therefore, the stone could be as ancient as the earliest of Danish rune stones. But the fact that the carver breaks completely with rigid convention – other-

Norra Åsum stone, Skåne. A good 200 cm. Retouched photograph. — The youngest of Denmark's "historical" rune stones, praying "Christ, son of Mary, help those who built this church, Archbishop Absalon and Esbern Snout", perhaps Absalon's brother (Esbern Snare). Absalon died in 1201, Esbern 1204. Since there is no reason to believe that the stone was put up after the death of the men who built the church — it seems altogether more likely that the stone commemorates its consecration — it must be dated between 1178, when Absalon became archbishop, and 1201, when he died. The stone has never been moved far from where it was originally set up. When Jon Skonvig sketched it early in the seventeenth century, it was standing in the wall of the churchyard "out in the northern entrance".



404 Fjenneslev stone, Sjælland. 220 cm. — Contrary to traditional runic practice, the inscription begins at the top (as we also assume the Hanning inscription may have done, though we can't be sure. Goodbye to all that!). The inscription tells us that Sasser set up the stone and made the bridge. The bridge, or rather its successor, still exists and is called Sassebros — Sasser's bridge. Did this sturdy stone once stand by the bridge, to be later hauled up to the hillock on which the church stands? Or did it always occupy its site in the churchyard, as a constant reminder to the congregation, from generation to generation, of an act that was not only goodneighbourly but also found favour with the Lord: Sasser built the bridge?



wise never flouted in the Viking Age — and begins his inscription at the top and works downwards shows that the real tradition of runic epigraphy is a thing of the past. The stone must be assigned to Period 3, perhaps to its earliest part: it is a transitional stone without transitional features [2].

388 The bridge over Tule river on the boundary of Fjenneslev parish is still called Sasser's bridge: Sassebros (1440 Sacerbro). Stones at Sandby on Sjælland and Källstorp in Skåne also tell of bridge-building, and †Ålebæk on Fyn and Tårnborgh on Sjælland probably do as well.

RUNIC GRAVE-SLABS

We have to believe that the custom of marking graves with standing stones was rather rapidly superseded in Period 3 by the practice of covering graves with flat tombstones. If people continued to put up rune stones, it was to commemorate other events than death and burial (cf. Norra Åsum).

404

From the start we find flat tombstones in a variety of types: most often they are merely decorated with a cross and have no inscription; if they have an inscription it may be in Danish and/or Latin and written in runes; or it may be in Latin and written in roman capitals (regular or uncial).

The runic tombstones do not differ in type from those with no inscription or those with majuscule lettering. Some have the flat trapezoid or rectangular shape, some have a slightly arched top (Swedish inscriptions call it a “vault” – cf. Gesing) – they probably started as coffin lids – and some are intended to represent a sarcophagus.

410

Some of the flat tombstones had gable-stones standing at head and foot (e.g. the London stone); but we can only certainly tell if this was so when both the upright stones are preserved. It is doubtless only the result of chance that we know of no runes on those gravestones that are best described as looking like an overgrown loaf of bread – a shape undoubtedly derived from imitation of a coffin made from a hollowed tree-trunk.

322

This type existed until well into the eighteenth century, and such wooden sepulchres, often with superbly carved relief ornament, are not uncommon from the renaissance period. We may despondently wonder how many romanesque coffins of this kind – and other memorials in wood – have been lost – and how many runes with them.

We are in no position to establish a firm relative chronology for the tombstones. It is usually thought that the trapezoid are older than the rectangular examples, and that inscriptions engraved precede inscriptions in relief. That would make Bjolderup with its relief-cut runes the youngest of those under discussion. Whether that is so no one can say. A point in favour of such an assessment is, however, that the “axe-heads”

*408

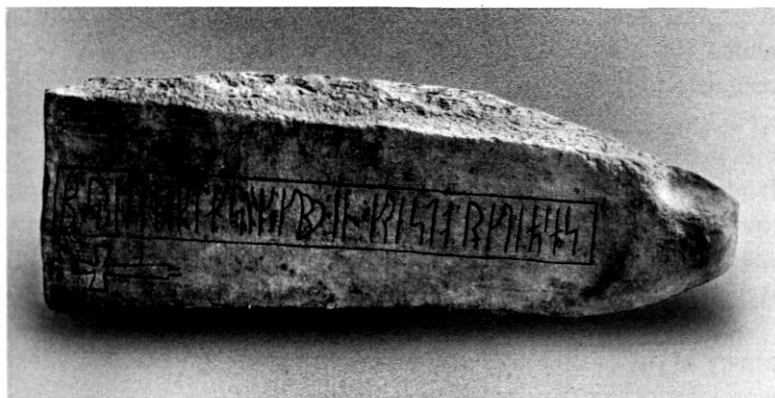


Vejerslev stone, North Jutland. 160 cm. Retouched photograph. — An example of an undressed and unornamented grave-slab (it originally lay flat). The inscription says: iuar hio runa þesa yvær skalmi broþær sin — Ivar hewed these runes over Skalmi, his brother.

- 409 On the right: the Bjolderup stone, South Jutland. 185 cm. Colour-washed photograph. — The stone was a “ledger”, a flat grave-slab or “vault” — either the actual coffin lid or a stone symbolising it. The cross was once seen as a sword, but it is a “tree of life” cross with four “axe-blade” foliage elements and three roots at the foot-end. The “axe-blades” and the runes cut in relief are novelties that date the stone to c. 1200. The inscription says: ketil urnæ ligir hir — Ketil Urn lies here.

which branch out from the “tree of life” cross on the Bjolderup slab are thought to be a late feature, one that would date the stone to after 1200. As usual, the runes themselves are poor criteria — though one must say that, as soon as an inscription contains p, æ, short s and ʏ for y, and perhaps also h for the spirant g, we are well on in Period 3.

The following specimens are arranged according to locality and without reference to type. Altogether we know more than



Føvling stone, North Jutland. 210 cm. Retouched photograph. — In spite of its shape, this was never a standing rune stone but a flat trapezoid grave-slab. Note that it has no spare end to stick in the ground and that if it were set up the processional cross would be upside down. The closely interwoven “bind-runes” and “same-stave runes” have been influenced by early majuscule inscriptions of the twelfth century, in which roman capitals were carved with letters ligatured and fitted inside each other. The inscription makes a Latin hexameter which tells us that Esbern Slow, priest or dean, lies here at rest in Christ.

a score of runic tombstones, including two that are lost and two that are doubtful.

Bjolderup stone, South Jutland:

*408

ketilurnæligirhir — Ketil Urn lies here.

The stone is trapezoid, rounded at the foot and with a convex surface; the “tree of life” sprouts from the bottom end. In relation to the cross the runes at the head are upside down — i.e. the stone’s decoration is “peripatetic” — one must walk round it to view the parts properly. On the problem of dating the stone, see above.

407

Føvling stone, North Jutland:

p : æsbirnik : langsum : kubap : in : kristo : rekuiæscæns
P(ræpositus — or Presbyter, Pastor, Pater?) Æsbern (h)ic
Langsum cubat in Kristo requiescens

P. Esbern Langsom (the slow) here lies at rest in Christ.

A literate man, the learned cleric who supplied the copy from which the carving was done, a man thoroughly versed in both roman and runic writing. Ligatured runes, “bind-runes”, are well known in inscriptions from the Viking Age and earlier, but not the complicated kind found here. These are borrowed from Latin monumental lettering, where carvers cut characters joined together and fitted inside each other, partly to save space and labour and partly perhaps to show off their skill. Cf.

428 Aggersborg plaster inscription.

As it stands, the inscription makes a hexameter and that must be why the first word was reduced to its initial. If it were written in full, the metrical feet would limp – it has to be read with the following æs-.

Sale stone 2, North Jutland, has a relief-cut processional cross and the name ingærþ (modern Inger), with a g like that on the
402 Hanning stone. The arrangement is “peripatetic”, as on the
409 Bjolderup stone.

*411 *Vester Velling stone*, North Jutland:
:lopæns : (g)raf – Lodden’s grave

The clumsy and slightly irregular runes are cut above a handsome cross in relief (and not upside down in relation to it as on the Bjolderup and Sale 2 slabs). The firmly carved “maltese” cross is certainly to be regarded as a processional cross (with a double-twined shaft) on a stepped base.

*412 The next tombstone, from *Gesing*, is interesting for several reasons. First, it is artistically the most ambitious of the group (though not the most successful – human and animal figures were not the carver’s force), attempting a composition more elaborate than the usual cross. Second, the artist gives his name in an inscription on the flat edge of the top of the stone, a signature written partly in regular roman letters, partly in mannered smaller versions of the same, and with one u-rune as well (unless he also thought of the two Rs as runes?). His name was Horder, cut here with a Latin ending, Horderus. A great many sculpted stones in churches in the neighbourhood of Randers have been attributed to him. Third, the inscription



Vester Velling stone, North Jutland. 160 cm. Retouched photograph.— 410
 The simple inscription, *løpæns graf* (tomb), is of the genitive type, familiar from both Period 1 and Period 2, e.g. the primitive Norse Bø stone, Norway, *hnabdas hlaiwa*, H.s mound, the Swedish Viking Age Rävsaal stone, *haripulfs stainar*, H.s. stone. Cf. also the Starup stone. The *33
 fine cross with its two-ply shaft is a processional cross stepped in its holder.

On the right: Suldrup stone 1, North Jutland. 170 cm. Retouched photograph. — 414
 An example of a normal romanesque trapezoid grave-slab with a far from normal inscription: *k nik* (read from right to left — but even then the first *k* is a reversed rune). The same mysterious inscription occurs in a different context on Øster Marie stone 6, Bornholm. 319

allows us to draw a conclusion of no small interest to the historian of culture and society. Horder, stone-mason and sculptor, was illiterate: he did not know roman or runic letters and had no idea what they stood for. He could only cut runes and letters following a model — indeed, he could not even do that, as the inscription shows full well. In that respect he resembled his colleague at Tåsinge (the one who carved the Bregninge “sarcophagus”) and many other carvers of the 415



Gesing stone 1, North Jutland. 163 cm. — Søren Abildgaard's drawing of 1769, now in the National Museum. The inscription is full of abominable errors and shows that the carver (who calls himself *Hordeus* — a latinisation of *Horder* — in a mixture of roman capitals and runes on the top edge) could neither read nor write. Over the paschal lamb we see a bishop who is identified by the invocation at the end — *niklaos gæti* — Nicholas guard — as St Nicholas of Myra (Santa Claus), a very popular saint in the middle ages, not least among seafarers and merchants, in Denmark as elsewhere. Many Danish churches are dedicated to him.

romanesque period, who botch, blunder and muddle their lettering to such an extent that it is hard to decide what might have stood in the text they were copying [3]. As with Sven Estridsson's runic coinage, we are once more reminded of the Migration Age goldsmiths, *Lægæst* of the Gallehus horn — though he at least could copy correctly — and the whole mob of bracteate-makers: capable craftsmen, artists even, but feeble performers when it came to reproducing the written word.

- 410 *Gesing stone 1*, North Jutland:
 þuæþ : gæpi : þyni : oæuf : yfæ : þyriæ : æbi : sun : lākhæ ||
 : wis : beþ(iy)[i] m[ar](i) : (n)aabisyll : niklaos : gæti || HOR-
 DERuS

Bregninge stone, Tåsinge. 120 cm. Retouched photograph. — Two men, Helge the deacon (or parish clerk) and Master Bo, got together to place this stone over the mortal remains of Sven Sasserson: Helge the deacon cut me. Master Bo made me. If the handsome arcades on the sides and the cross and lily on the ends were illustrated, we should see what a competent craftsman Master Bo was; but the picture of the risen Christ, with cross-nimbus and grasping the cross of victory, shows that he was no sculptor of world class, and he was certainly illiterate.



Thved (?) made this vault over Thyre Ebbeson the short. We (?) pray Mary be gracious to his soul. Nicholas guard (him and the grave). Horderus.

It is quite a mouthful but the translation probably gets near the mark. The name *niklaos* shows that the bishop pictured on the stone must be St Nicholas of Myra, one of the most popular of all the saints in the medieval world. A corresponding use of the verb *gæta*, to guard, take care of, is found in a Norwegian inscription — “may God guard you ...” [4]. — Horder (or his apprentice) cuts *ʌ* for a kind of *ø* sound (here reproduced as *y*); his *ʀ* is transliterated as *w*.

*411 *Suldrup stone 1*, North Jutland:
k : nik :

No interpretation (hardly safe to guess it is an abbreviation of the St Nicholas formula on the Gesing stone?). The first k is a reversed rune. The same mysterious combination of letters is cut alongside the cross on Øster Marie stone 6 on Bornholm, where the runes ku · i ... are also written in the shaft of the cross.

422 The end-piece of a tombstone from *Elsø*, North Jutland, has these handsomely carved runes on it (their feet towards the edge): thru : iþt : – which, despite the division mark (cf. the Børglum column base), must render the name Thruid.

On the *Galtrup stone* – we are still in North Jutland, the granite ashlar country – we read in small, cramped runes: hærligr : · | isulfr : þo | rgils : sun – Here lies Isulv Thorgilsson. It is worth noting that Isulv has kept his nominative marker –r – a retention that probably only belongs to the written language. Below the inscription is a big cross in double outline and at the bottom a “romanesque” lion, minus its head but still waving a fine tail with a pair of acanthus leaf terminals.

Hillerslev stone in North Jutland has both Latin majuscules (in the names THORCHIL and MERGRET) and runes (a pious formula in which only the name Maria can be read with confidence). It is a tombstone prepared for the grave of a noble couple, with two crosses on it and a coat of arms. The Latin lettering shows forms that suggest a date at the end of the twelfth century.

The little island of Tåsinge can flaunt a single runic tombstone (great Fyn has none at all), sarcophagus-like, with fine arcades on the long sides, cross and lily at the ends, and the risen Christ with a processional cross on the top. The runic inscription is on a bevelled edge, interrupted at the top end by two of the pear-shaped human heads that are so common in the dressed-stone churches (cf. Sædding).

*425

Håstveda stone, Skåne.
Sandstone. 60 cm wide,
i.e. 4 cm more than the
London stone which, like
this one, was a gable
stone standing at head or
foot of a flat grave-
slab. The Latin inscrip-
tion is a modification of
Christ's last words on the
Cross: Into your hands,
O Lord, I commend your
spirit, Åse.



416

Bregninge stone, Tåsinge:

+ sūen : sa | zærsuæn : ligærhæunde : helge | diakææn : ri |
stæmek : mæstær : bo : györpæmk : :
Sven Sasserson lies hereunder. Helge the deacon cut me.
Master Bo made me.

*413

Helge the deacon, or parish clerk, wrote the copy for the in-
scription (and perhaps sketched the very primitive Christ
figure), and Master Bo, stone-mason and carver, sculpted the
stone. The extraordinary orthography plainly reveals the fact
that Master Bo made only a slightly better job of copying the
text he was given than Master Horder did on the Gesing stone.

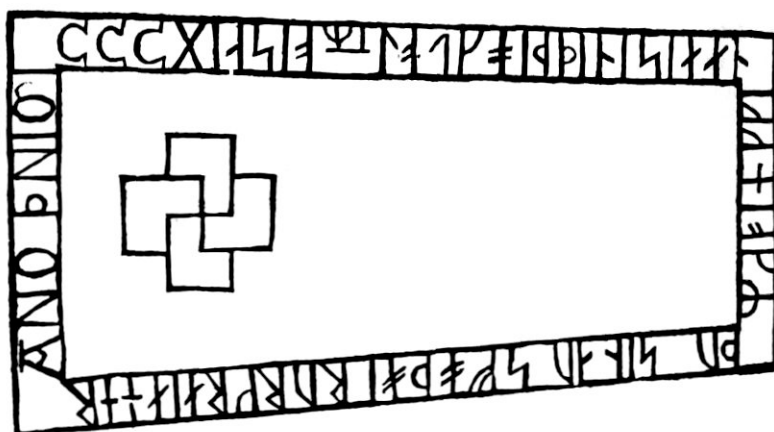
410

Lolland and Falster have no runic tombstones, and the same
is true of Sjælland unless the rectangular granite slab at *Søborg*
was part of a grave (perhaps the top of a coffin?): it has *auæ*
māria, Hail Mary, on it.

Three tombstones are known from Skåne, two of them only
from drawings.

†*Allerum stone* contained the complete Ave followed by
amen, after which came: *hær : ligr : hilþulf : suin : sun :*
unþær - Here lies Hildulv Svensson under.

*272



- 417 †Lösen stone 3, Blekinge. 205 cm. — Woodcut from c. 1746. The last dated Danish gravestone with runes — 1310 or 1311. Apart from the date, we learn little of interest from this confused copy except that it was placed over “father” — but whether that represents the proper name, Fader, or gives the family status of the dead man is more than we can tell. The plaited cross forms a swastika at the centre. Has the swastika been converted to Christianity — like so many other pagan symbols?

†Östra Hoby stone 1 was in Latin:

anima : famuli : tui : benedikti | tekum : sine | fine : rekuieskat
: in : pace : amen

May the soul of your servant Benedict rest with you in peace
without end, amen.

- *415 *Hästveda stone* also has a Latin inscription:
inmanustuasdominèkomændospiritum | tuum | asa
Into your hands, O Lord, I commend your spirit, Åse.

This handsome and well-carved stone stood at the head or foot of a flat tombstone (now found again [4a]); its twin is lost. The inscription adapts Christ’s last words on the cross (Luke 23.46, from Psalm 31.6), which are also used as a response at compline — a suitable “goodnight” or funeral prayer.

Halland has one gable-stone and one flat tombstone with runes.

Holm stone:

: hiar : (lig)æf : ennar : arnbiornar : sun : gup

Here lies Einar Arnbjørn's son. God ... — the rest of the invocation may have been inscribed on the other (lost) gable-stone. The stone has cross and lily like the Bregninge stone on Tåsinge. 415

Of the Blekinge material I shall mention only *Lösen stone 3*. *416
We possess only a small fragment of this trapezoid-shaped stone, along with a poor drawing of it when it was whole. Interest centres on the date on the stone: In the year of Our Lord 1311 (or 1310) NN had this stone made over . . . and father (or the proper name, Fader). The date is in roman numerals: ANO PNI MCCCX(I) — anno domini 1310 (1311).

INSCRIPTIONS ON BUILDINGS

Churches supply a wealth of inscriptions, cut or scratched on ashlar, on doorways (most often of all), and on or by chancel arches. The soft limestone and fresh plaster — still drying out — in the church building offered tempting surfaces to the aspiring author or artist. The carpenter and mason and the sculptor in wood or stone could use runes to number their sections, roof timbers and reliefs. Many items of church furniture are also marked with runes.

Who were they, these men who cut their names in ashlar, lintel and jamb stones of doorway and window, stones all over the place? It used to be thought — I thought so myself — that the names were those of the master-builders, but that is certainly a mistake. The names are those of the individual craftsmen who, like the moneyers, left their signatures to show they did not disown their work.

But there are inscriptions commemorating patrons and master-builders — indeed, we have met two already, Toke's Lund stone 2 and the Norra Åsum stone put up by Archbishop Absalon and Esbern. 241 404



- 419 Øster Brønderslev door-jamb, North Jutland. 145 cm. — The inscription announces that the church is dedicated to Christ and was built at the behest of Sven Germundsson.
- 422 Top right: Funder column base, North Jutland. The runes are 4–5 cm tall. Retouched photograph. Contains the name *niklas* — Nicholas, modern Danish *Niels*, the name of the stone-cutter.
- 422 Bottom right: Børglum column base, North Jutland. 22 × 33 cm. With a master-mason's inscription in a mixture of Danish and Latin: *mester tufi me | fecit*, followed by the unintelligible runes: *mit*. The stone speaks in its own person. Objects that utter like this are found neither in Period 1 nor in Period 2 — it is only in the middle ages, Period 3, that they begin to open their runic mouths. The side shown here contains the start of the inscription; note the division mark in the middle of *mes-ter* and the “bind-rune” *tu*.

It is certainly the name of the patron that is revealed in the inscription on a door-jamb in *Øster Brønderslev* church in North Jutland: *418

kirkia : er : kriste : kǣnt : mānom || suen : sūn : germūntar ×
til : misgūnta | r

The church is dedicated to Christ for mercy towards men. Sven, son of Germund.

The alliteration and rhyme turn the inscription into an interesting jingle. — Alongside the common dotted k-rune ƿ for g, the carver also uses the late form, ʀ, known from Hanning and elsewhere. Archaeologists date the church to 1150–1200. 402

But no name or achievement has ever been expressed with more brevity, wit and precision than in two Jutland churches, at Søndbjerg and Kragelund.

Søndbjerg plinth stone, North Jutland: *423

: iakop : uulæ : skialm : gurpæ : ubiara || ibi okulus

Jakob caused (i.e. commissioned). Skjalm made. Where the altar, there the eye.

Could it be said neater or quicker who the patron and builder were? And Jutland speech is clearly heard in the form *wulle*. The stone is now a corner plinth stone in the gothic tower but is seems certain that it did the same service in its romanesque predecessor.

Kragelund, North Jutland: *423

æsi + bap + uahn + rist — Æse ordered. Vagn cut.

While the Søndbjerg inscription is terse and clear, this one can be called terse and obscure. Obviously, Æse is the patron, but who or what is Vagn? The master-builder or the owner of the workshop that supplied the doorway?

It must at any rate be the sculptor himself who gives his name last on the keystone of the chancel arch in *Poulsker* on Bornholm. A picture of the apostle Paul is cut in it in high relief. This late romanesque church was dedicated to him, and his name 𐀓𐀓𐀔𐀚𐀔𐀚 is cut in his nimbus (a sign rather like an

owner's mark occurs between a and u), but in the open book he is holding are the words:

tofi : gio | erþi – Tue made.

The Ørsted ashlar from Fyn also provides the sculptor's name. It has a carving in high and firm relief of Samson fighting the lion, somewhat unorthodox inasmuch as Samson is astride the lion's back and is armed with sword and shield (not a unique portrayal however). The inscription surrounds the heavy fronds of the lion's tail, and here we meet something we have never met before in the Primitive Norse period or the Viking Age: picture and message are in intimate association – the runes explain the illustration.

*425 *Ørsted ashlar, Fyn:*

æskil i karþi skar sa | mson han tarab | tiur

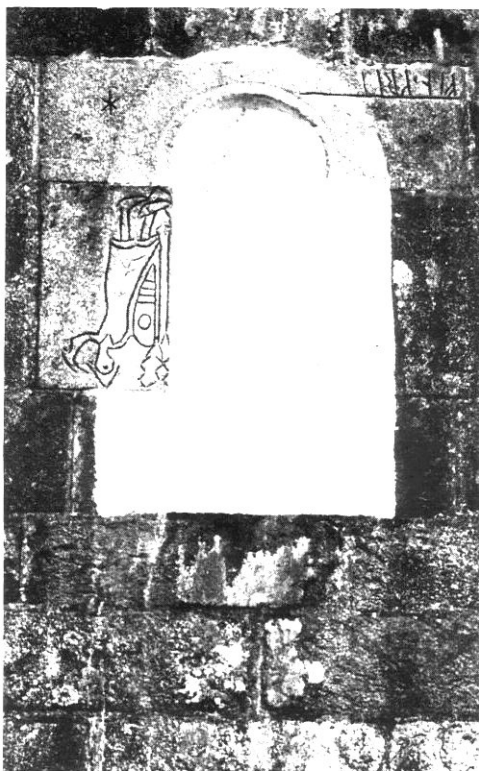
Eskil of Gård carved Samson. He slew the beast.

We note that, although the relief is chipped out of the hard granite, Eskil still uses the verb *skera*, to cut or carve, as if he were talking about a piece of wood. The use of this verb must be a relic from the timber churches – there were still plenty of them when Ørsted was built. The same is true of an inscription on a door-lintel in Östra Herrestad church in Skåne, where in roman letters we find CARL STENMESTER SCAR THENNA STEN – Karl the master-mason carved this stone – though here the word “stone” is consciously added as the object of *skera* [5].

In a limestone ashlar in *Holtug church*, Sjælland, an inscription is really *cut*: tirap̥ : rist, Tirad cut. It could have been inscribed at any time, but the dotted þ is a firm indication that it was done in the Middle Ages and by a man who was keen to mark the distinction between voiceless þ and voiced ð.

Two inscriptions on the limestone of the north portal of Allerslev church have as little connection with the building of the church as the Holtug inscription has. But they too are “authentic”, i.e. from the heyday of runic usage:

Åstrup church ashlars, North Jutland. The knight stone 60.5 × 35.5 cm. Photograph with details retouched. — There are two ashlars in the church wall that have runic inscriptions, one the futhork, the other (a window lintel stone) a solitary h-rune and: fin kar(p)i — Fin made (ar bind-runes). A third stone has a carving of a fully-armed knight — and he is also standing on his head. The puzzle was solved when the church was restored. Inside the building traces were found of an older stone church, and these three topsy-turvy ashlars had come from there. The lower picture is of a papier maché impression with the runes painted in.



*261



Viborg plinth stone, North Jutland. 50 cm long. Retouched photograph. — The very clumsy runes give us the stone-cutter's name, As-ser. On the broad, slightly hollowed chamfer there is the so-called ring-chain ornament — which may or may not have symbolic significance.



422

- *423 *Allerslev inscriptions 1-2, Sjælland:*
 1: iōr(d)an risti runu rāþi þæn ær kan
 Jordan cut the runes. Read who can.

2: kywrþ : risti : nafn : sit | o??nwr?? : mæsu
 Gyrd cut his name on ... [some saint's] mass.

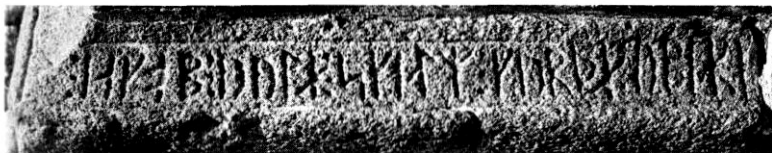
Allerslev 1 has ↑ for t, Allerslev 2 has 1 ; Allerslev 1 has 4 for o in the opening ligature, Allerslev 2 uses # ; both have a- and n-runes with the oblique stroke on one side of the stave only and both have ʃ for æ. On Allerslev 2 ʌ = y but ʀ = w. On the “read” formula see Lund needle 3.

The romanesque church at *Lille Hedinge*, Sjælland, contains a limestone ashlar in the eastern bevel of the south door on which incised runes were found in 1976: pætar, Peter [5a] – the name of a craftsman or passer-by.

It was perhaps a pious workman who cut ʃ ʁþ ʀ, amen, on an ashlar of limestone in the apse of the church at *Store Hedinge*, also on Sjælland. In theory these runes could have been cut at any time, but since a neighbouring ashlar has a typical romanesque lion's head carved on it the inscription is doubtless to be dated to the thirteenth century. Elsewhere in the apse there is a ship-carving.

While the six last “building” inscriptions can be called casual or tourist inscriptions, each of the following is firmly connected with the construction of the church in question and is consequently contemporary with it. All the names are those of stone-masons, each one a master, as Bo calls himself on the Bregninge tombstone and Tue (in Latin even) on the Børglum column base. All the following stones either are or in all probability were components of church doorways – including the Viborg plinth stone, even though it was not found in a church context.

- *424 North Jutland: *Holsted*: tuki (Toke). *Ål*: blomæ (Blomme –
 *418 literally, flower). †*Hammel* 2: mahnus (Magnus). *Funder col-*
 *421 *umn base*: niklas (Niklas, Nicholas). *Viborg plinth*: ascir
 *418 (Assir, Asser). *Vitskøl plinth*: asir (Assir, Asser). *Børglum*
column base: mes · ter · tufi me · || fecit · mit · (Master Tue
 made me – but what does mit mean?).



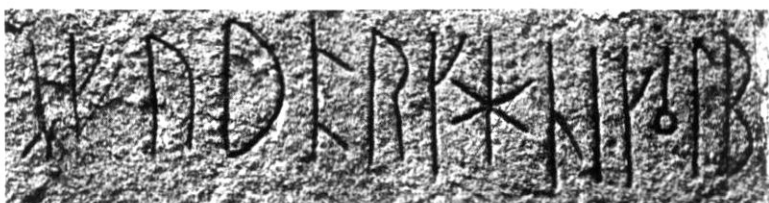
Kragelund lintel stone, North Jutland. 130 cm wide. Retouched photograph. — Pithy and to the point, like the inscription on the Sønderbjerg plinth: Æse ordered, Vagn cut — patron and master-builder (or who?). The inscription is on the under side of the lintel stone. 419

Sønderbjerg plinth stone, North Jutland. 67 cm in length. — A corner plinth stone in the romanesque tower, it was retained in the same function when the present gothic tower replaced it. In broad Jutish and the fewest possible words the inscription introduces patron and builder — iakop uulæ skialm gursæ — Jakob commissioned, Skjalm made. This is followed by the pregnant Latin sentence, *ubi ara, ibi okulus* — where the altar, there the eye — which presumably means that one should attend closely to what goes on in the mass — unless it has some still profounder significance. 419

Allerslev inscription 1, Sjælland. An impression photographed without retouching. The runes are 3–4 cm tall. Cut in the limestone door-jamb of the north portal. — The inscription contains a phrase frequently met with in Scandinavian runic inscriptions of the Viking Age and especially of the medieval period: *Jordan cut the runes. Read who can.* — Another inscription below this one tells us that Gyrd cut his name on the feast-day of some saint or other. A pair of scribbling tourists of the thirteenth century. 422



- *399 Mønsted window lintel, North Jutland. 114 × 46 cm. Retouched photograph. — The inscription gives the medieval futhork, cf. the Mønsted ashlar.



- *399 Mønsted ashlar, North Jutland. 86 × 30.5 cm. Retouched photograph. — Like the Mønsted lintel stone, this one also gives the futhork (as far as b). Two of the runes are cut backwards, errors which show how useful it was for craftsmen to be able to “look up a futhork” as a model for any inscribing or numbering they might undertake.



- 422 Ål ashlar, North Jutland. 58 × 33 cm. — The stone is now upside down in the rebuilt chancel wall. The inscription gives the stone-cutter's name: blomæ — Blomme.



Ørsted ashlar, Fyn. 88 × 44.5 cm. Retouched photograph. — Samson's
 fight with the lion — astride the great beast's back and armed with sword
 and shield — a favourite subject of romanesque artists. In Periods 1 and 2
 inscriptions never have any direct connection with the pictures they
 accompany (see e.g. the caption to Hunnestad stone 1), but in this case the
 runes are an explanatory label of the whole thing: Eskil of
 Gård carved Samson — he slew the beast. Even though the stone is hard
 granite, the woodworking verb, *skera*, is still used — it certainly does
 not imply that a wooden model was followed.



Sædding ashlar, North Jutland. 61 × 46 cm. The runes have been re-
 touched. — We do not know whose head is portrayed here and the in-
 scription doesn't help — it says: har m.

Skåne: *Lund cathedral*, a double capital from about 1080 in the north gallery of the old tower demolished in the nineteenth century: *īakōb*. (Is this the oldest dated instance of *ī* (ā) for o?). Jakob carved two heads, a man's and a woman's, among the foliage on the capital, and we may be confident that they represent himself and his wife. Throughout the medieval and renaissance periods it was not at all uncommon for artists to "insert" themselves in their pictures or among their ornament. Later we shall discover a master-carver hidden among the decoration on a font.

Graffiti and carpenters' runes belong with the "building" inscriptions and are closely connected with the actual construction of churches.

Plaster markings signify whatever may have been scratched with stick, knife or awl — they may be letters, symbols or pictures — in the still damp mortar rendering on internal church walls. The inscriptions and the plaster are thus contemporary. It is not particularly difficult to see whether these were made when the plaster was damp or dry. If you write or draw something with a stick in wet plaster, a small ridge is thrown up on either side of the furrow you make — one sees



Glass pane from Give, North Jutland. 7.9 × 3.3 cm. — The sad remains of our one and only example of "glass"runes, discovered in the foundation of the limestone altar along with fragments picturing the church's patron saint. The runes, with a *p*-rune of the kind also found on the †Hardeberga bell, are to be read: *furpi(k)*, where *furpi* can be the past of the verb *fōra*, modern *føre*, to bring, carry, move. It is possibly the remnants of an explanatory caption, corresponding to the runic inscription on the Åkirkeby font.



†Norra Åkarp inscription, Skåne, with painted runes. — When the mural still existed, the inscription was read as: *iesus nazarenus* — which does *not* agree with the only preserved photograph (reproduced here) which suggests the following: †isu??????, with many more runes than the first reading includes. The runes have the same small serif-like additions at top and bottom as on the Oddum stone.

438

399

just the same thing in inscriptions made in brick clay before firing. Scratching on dry plaster does not produce these small ridges, but the lines are usually uneven.

The smooth plastered walls, whether wet or dry, were a temptation to workmen and visitors alike. Some of them were content to scratch just their own name or the name of a girl-friend, or a pious appeal to Jesus or the Blessed Virgin or the parson. Others might have a malicious dig at a comrade, others again indulged in regular public-lavatory inscriptions.

Educated and uneducated people joined in. Some could command Latin and both roman and runic script; others who had none of these at their fingertips laboriously copied, or tried to copy, a text or inscription they had in front of them. The same urge to scribble then as now — irresistible when faced with a virgin wall. But these scratchings can certainly be enough to give a reader grey hairs — perhaps a whole head of them. Anyone who has the curiosity to take on these mural inscriptions will be no worse than the runologist — and maybe

better – at solving the riddles that remain unsolved. At any rate, this author finds himself constantly either throwing in the sponge or proposing solutions – in the cagiest fashion – which may appear as bizarre as the inscriptions themselves – or more.

In DaRun, the standard work published in 1942, there are only two of these mural inscriptions. Since then they have been discovered in goodly numbers – not tedious reading by any means and a welcome addition to the ceremonial inscriptions on stone.

If we start with Jutland and go by way of the islands (Fyn, Sjælland, Lolland-Falster) to Skåne and Blekinge, the collection is as follows.

- *429 *North Jutland. Aggersborg church* (south of the great circular Viking fortress). In 1977 several runic inscriptions were discovered in the romanesque layer of plaster. Ave Maria was found in the south wall of the chancel just out from the altar and on the south wall of the nave as well. On the latter surface the name margareta was also found – presumably not one of the saints of that name for no qualifying “sancta” accompanies it – probably therefore a girl the writer was fond of. The same south wall has the longest and most interesting of the
- *409 inscriptions. The ligatured runes are as complex as on the Förling stone:

gūþ : g??æ : thōrlich : ōr : hææ : stat : thēr : pæter : s(ual)e :
mæc : scref : a mēn

God (save) Thorlich from Hære (a Norwegian farm-name). Stand there! (addressed to the inscription). Peter S(val)e (swallow) wrote me. Amen.

- The verb after gūþ is illegible – theoretically the writer could have meant just the opposite of “save”. – This inscription with its extremely interesting spelling was written by a Norwegian – like the next one at neighbouring Tornby. Here we find both a Norwegian place-name and the Norwegian preposition
- 493 or (cf. the Ribe healing stick).

Gullev plaster inscription, North Jutland. The runes were carved in the wet romanesque mortar above a niche, 29 × 23 cm (42 cm deep), to the west in the north wall of the chancel. The runes (c. 1.5 cm) can be read | ð: | ' | 4 i(u)?icia, which may be plur. of indicium (proof) or perhaps iudicium (judgment); but why such a word over a niche that was probably reserved for sacred vessels? Photo: Henrik Græbe. — Not examined by the author.



430



Aggersborg plaster inscription 6, North Jutland. Like the one in the not far distant Tornby church, this long inscription on the north wall of the nave was written by a Norwegian who knew what he was about. As on the Føvling stone, the inscription is full of complicated bind-runes — not to save space (there was plenty of that) but to show off the writer's skill. The same kind of lettering game is found in the oldest majuscule inscriptions. The runes 5–7.5 cm.

428



Drøsselbjerg inscription, Sjælland. — In the west wall of the north doorway but now removed and preserved in the National Museum. The name William, spelt willælmus, is scratched in the dry plaster, but there can be no doubt of its authenticity and age (medieval) — the w-rune guarantees it. The work of another day-tripper, like those at Allerslev.

430

422

Tornby plaster inscriptions.

þorstæin bræ . . . ræist runar þessar a pikiz dahum . . . han
[h]af(p)i mikit gamān af tonomum morhen(e)n þ(e)r

Thorstein Bre . . . cut these runes at Whitsun . . . He had much
delight from the notes (the choir-song) in the morning there.

That this is the work of a Norwegian, we can see from the s-,
z- and p-runes, the diphthong and the forms þessar and pikiz.
The interpretations offered of this inscription are calculated
to cheer the patient reader. The word tonom was first read as
ionom and interpreted as “Johanne” – a nice girl’s name.
Then it was thought to be dative plural of *ior*, a horse – and
the reference was to a race-meeting. Finally, the correct read-
ing showed that Thorstein went in for neither wenching nor
gambling but was a Norwegian plasterer with a taste for music.
– The runes are on the north wall of the chancel, which is
otherwise full of stray runes, roman letters, and drawings
many and various.

*429 *Gullev church*. A fragmentary inscription, found in 1976:
. . . i(u)?icia . . . In a niche in the north wall of the chancel, just
beside the chancel-arch wall.

The word kandelabrum is on the chancel-arch wall at *Mos-
bjerg* and in the church of *Skellerup* the proper name; niko-
laus.

Fyn has no plaster inscriptions to offer, so we jump to *Sjæl-
land*. We have proper names in the churches at *Drøsselbjerg*

*431 (willælmus) and *Søstrup* (iohai).

The “friendly” inscription at *Sønder Asmindrup* is not a new
discovery:

toki · tok · silf : at lani · af · ræhnldu

Toke took silver on loan from Rægnild.

Clearly this is the work of some good friend of Toke. Two
other inscriptions here are meaningless and of no interest.
A third tells us that Toke scratched runes on the feast-day
of St Olav (29 July) – we would rather have had a date with
a year in it.



Roskilde Cathedral plaster inscription 1, Sjælland, with the name Godefridus followed by the cryptic nafuam. The question is: do the two “words” belong together, or were they carved by different hands and at different times? The runes measure 5–7 cm. 432



Roskilde Cathedral plaster inscription 2, Sjælland : D[ominus] iacobus ru (ry?), The uncial D stands for Dominus (Sir). The c-rune is full size, and the s-rune here, as in nr 1, of the youngest type. It is impossible to determine whether the last rune is u or y. The runes measure 5–7 cm. 432




Søstrup plaster inscription, Sjælland. — The runes, 2.5 cm tall, were scratched in the dry plaster on the north wall of the chancel, in the white belt of the palmette frieze below the figures of the mural decoration (Nørlund–Lind, *Kalkmalerier*, fig. 77; c. AD 1175). The instrument used had a split point, only one side of which was used for the first rune and one of the side-strokes on the h-rune. The runes make: iohai – perhaps the beginning of iohannes? The inscription was certainly made after the murals were completed and is probably best regarded as another tourist’s signature, cf. Allerslev and elsewhere. 430




Tjæreby church has on the north wall of the chancel:
 tomas : prest : biþ : fori : mik:
 Priest Thomas, pray for me.

- *431 When choir benches on the north side in *Roskilde cathedral* were removed in 1980, runes, sketches and scrawls were discovered on the wall behind, incised in the dry plaster. Among them was:

godefridus : nafuam(?) | D[ominus] iacobus ru(or ry)

It is not easy to see what nafuam is supposed to represent. D = Dominus is not a rune but an unical roman D.

- In 1981 an interesting inscription was uncovered in *Måløv church*, about halfway along the north wall of the nave, just three runes:  kar — i.e.vessel, probably referring to the baptismal font which often stood on a pedestal in the middle of the nave — as still in Gotland churches, for example. If this is so, the inscription is parallel to kandelabrum in Mosbjerg church in Jutland.
- 430

- Only two brief inscriptions are known in *Bornholm*, iakob
 *399 in *Ibsker* and a futhork in *Nyker*. In the latter b is followed by  and after this there are two vertical strokes which perhaps allow us to suppose that the writer confused  m and  y.

- Skåne* has a wealth of plaster inscriptions, with concentrations in *Stoby* and *Åhus churches*. In the handsome church
 *433 at *Vä*, dedicated to Our Lady, are the remains of an inscription from about 1150 on the east wall of the nave [6]:

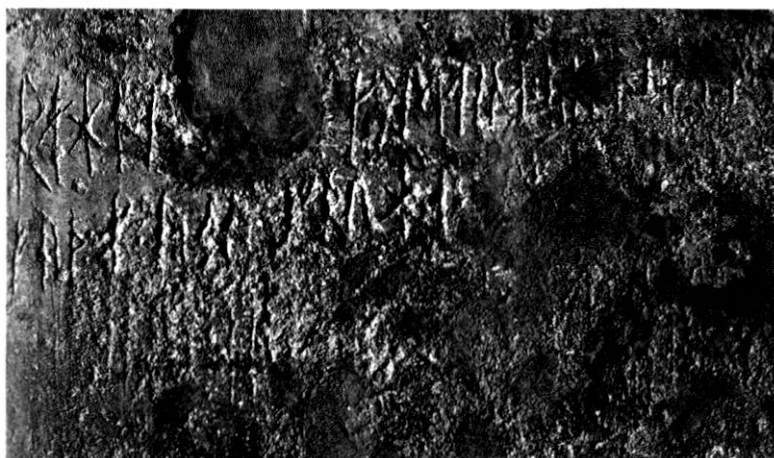
ræhni ... (k) kristina : s??ns ... | guþ : ôk : uor : fruha ...m ...
 Rægnild? Christina ... God and Our Lady

- The large runic letters in the east wall of the first storey of
 *433 the west tower of *Lyngsjö church* came to light in 1979:

gesus krist | ..ni : þan ær mik : skref
 Jesus Christ, reward (help) him who wrote me.



Lyngsjö plaster inscription, Skåne. On the east wall of the spacious tower's first storey – a place where few people ever come to pry, in the dim light from the little window – an anonymous writer has cut deep runes and prayed Christ to save him. Photo: Marie Stoklund and E. Moltke. 432



Vä plaster inscription, Skåne. On the east wall of the chancel, 180 cm above the floor. The inscription, very fragmentary as can be seen, names two ladies, Rægnild and Kristina, and God and Our Lady. What we know of the building and its history dates the inscription to the twelfth century. From Sveriges kyrkor. 432

*435ff. The many inscriptions in *Stoby church* are divided between the north wall of the apse and the north wall of the chancel. There are only two inscriptions in the apse: *topi* – the oldest instance of this name (*Topi*) that was later to be so common; and under it:

nimess(i)???uimmissam

The runes are very clear at beginning and end; there are no division marks. It probably has nothing to do with any holy office but is a stray bit of Latin quotation. Assuming *messit* is the perfect indicative of *meto*, I harvest, cut off, cut down, we can construe thus:

ni messi(t) (et) uim missam

which ought to say: if he has not (also) harvested (cut off) the force (strength) despatched – but whether this is right will be hard to tell until we stumble on the source.

The north wall of the chancel is filled with runes and scrawls, all mixed up together, apparently written in the dry plaster on a variety of occasions. Two different persons have written the Hail Mary formula – one of them consistently uses an *n*-rune (with the *by*-stave on one side only) when he should write *a*.

We detect a certain inadequacy in Latin in the second word of the inscription:

uerbum Donumis

– unless it is a question of dyslexia. What was intended was obviously *Verbum Domini* (*manet in æternum*). *D* in *Donumis* is written like *P*. Spread over the wall we find the names *Nicolaus* and *Benedict*, written *nikulan* (with roman *K*; the *n*-stroke in the last rune is perhaps an addition) and *bæne-diktis* respectively. At the west end, close to the chancel-arch wall, big clear runes say: *monakus* – i.e. monk. In the midst of the medley we find:

Dætte ǫr + skr(i)fiþ | [a]f bassæ

This is written by Basse (or must be a mistake for *er*).



Stoby plaster inscriptions and drawings, Skåne. Photograph, partially retouched, by Marie Stoklund and E. Moltke. The engravings were made by different hands and at different times, mostly after the mortar had dried. You find aue maria, uerbumdonumis, orabat iudas, along with other runes and letters. 434f.



Stoby plaster inscription 15, Skåne, consists of a single word: monakus, i.e. monk. North wall west. The runes c. 5 cm. Photo: Marie Stoklund and E. Moltke.

Most interesting however are the Judas inscriptions. About halfway along the wall is:

orabaþ iudas – i.e. orabat Judas, Judas prayed.

This is followed by a number of smaller (secondary) runes, apparently without significance and quite fragmented. Lower down the words are repeated, though now spelt: orabat iutas. And as if twice were not enough, they are found a third time higher up the wall – but now thoroughly corrupt.

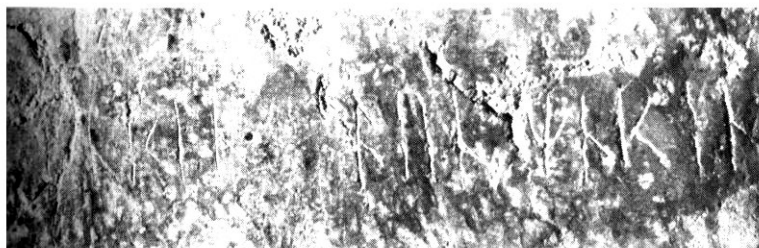
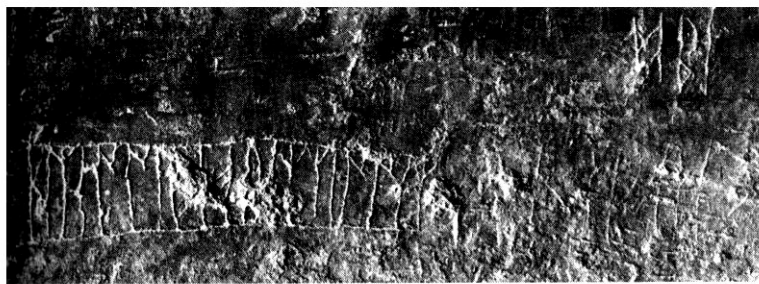
I have put myself out – and a number of other scholars – to discover the source of this Judas orabat. Now the learned Byzantinist, Jørgen Raasted, writes to me (here translated): “Splendid co-operation between Christopher Hohler, Merete Geert Andersen and me has now led to an assured identification. It refers to an antiphon which was used (but is no longer) at Lauds on the feast of Inventio Sanctae Crucis (3 May). In Hesbert’s *Antiphonarium* the prayer reads: Orabat Judas deus deus meus ostende mihi lignum sanctæ crucis alleluia. The

Stoby plaster inscriptions, Skåne. Two inscriptions on the north side of the apse: the name Topi and the more puzzling nimessi etc. The vertical strokes above topi were perhaps meant to keep some kind of account. Photo: Marie Stoklund and E. Moltke.

Stoby plaster inscription 5, Skåne. The frequent Ave Maria formula. The ave has disappeared, and a look at the illustration will show that the carver insists on cutting þ n instead of 4 a. The roundish u-form suggests a rather late period. The runes c. 3–5 cm. Photo: Marie Stoklund and E. Moltke.

Stoby plaster inscription 10, Skåne. The words orabaþ iudas is the great sensation – because its problem is solved. The words, more or less corrupt, are repeated three times. The learned Byzantinist, Jørgen Raasted, tells us that we here have a quotation from an antiphon which was used on the feast of the Invention of the Cross (3 May). Photo: Marie Stoklund and E. Moltke.

- 438 Åhus plaster inscriptions, Skåne c. 5 cm. diko : simen : est : ??fusa (I say Simen is a ...) and c. 2 cm. smicael (St Michael). Photo: Marie Stoklund and E. Moltke.



reference is to the Jew who, according to the legend, indicated where Jesus's cross was buried (cf. *Legenda aurea* under *Inventio crucis*)."

There are numerous other inscriptions, short and long (including a large capital A), but they are all so badly preserved that no sense is to be made of them.

*437 There are also various inscriptions on the western pillars of the divided nave of *Åhus church* [7]. A long inscription on the south side (towards the aisle) has suffered so much from the ravages of time and humankind that decipherment is hardly possible. But on the north side, protected by the pew seats, there are many inscriptions that can still be read and understood:

māria mr?a – petrus – ruffus – auæ : māria : gratia : plena . . .
– petrus iohannis simen fib – [di]ko : simen : est : . . . fusa(?)æ
: k(d)i (I say: Simon is a ???) – fuþork h (with the o-rune crossed through) – s micael (i.e. St Michael).

Not all the inscriptions are totally legible and understandable, e.g.

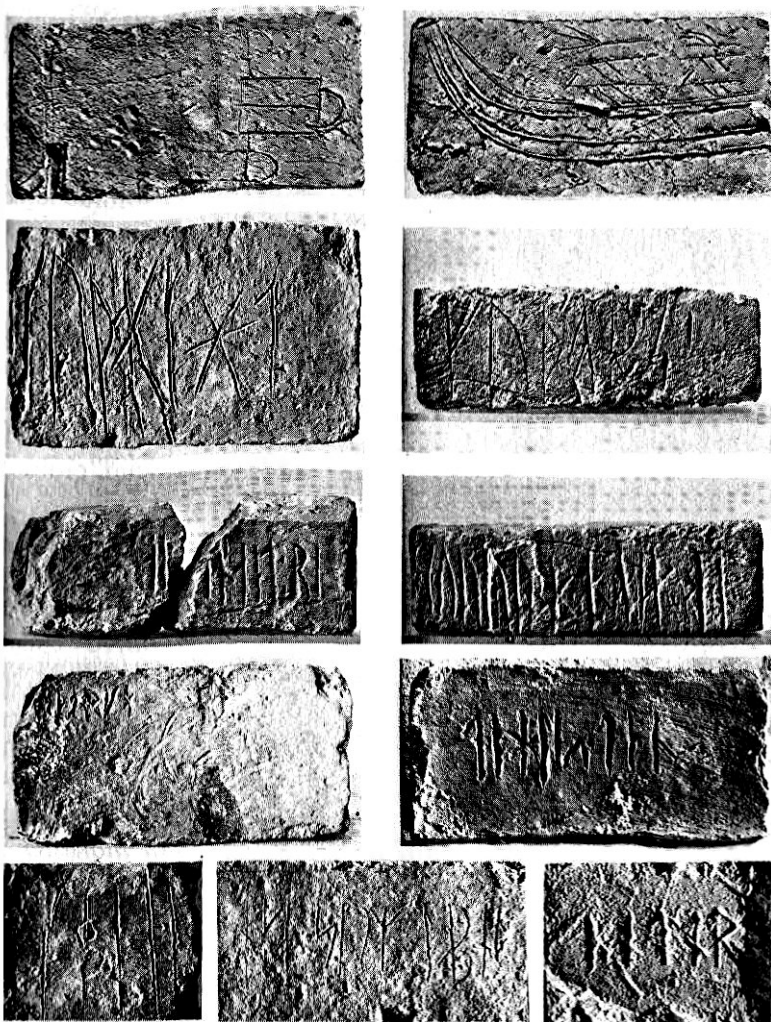
riska · dit(æ)ma – tur???ius – sl(ak)atuus. There is also the first æt of the futhork – but in poor shape.

*427 High up on the triumph wall above the chancel arch in the demolished church at *Norra Åkarp*, Skåne, was a *painted runic inscription* which was read as *iesus nazareus*, Jesus of Nazareth; but the runes that can be made out on an old photograph, though far from clear, do not correspond to this reading.

In the church of *St. Olof in Skåne* on the east pillar of the nave is carved:

sānte | ōlof biþ fyr mik, St. Olaf pray for me. – Communication from *Sveriges runeinskrifter* 1983.

Carpenters' runes, runes used to number roof-beams and the like, have been found in three churches in South Jutland



Eleven bricks with sketches and runes scratched in the wet clay before it was fired. 1-3. Vejby (North Jutland) with the plan of a church (Borglum?), a ship, the words *olof olof* and *fuporkha*. — 4. Astrup (North Jutland): *fupor(k)*. — 5. Ledøje (Sjælland): *all??naet : ri* (not interpreted). — 6. Nykøbing (Sjælland): *iuuuuhhhiiht* (not interpreted). — 7. Øm monastery 4 (Jutland): *(u)porkh*. — 8. Nørre Løgum (South Jutland): *tihlsten* (i.e. brick). — 9. Øm monastery 1 (Jutland): *ketil* (personal name). — 10. Lösen 4 (Blekinge): *eko sum lapis* (I am a stone). — 11. Ravnkilde 3 (North Jutland): *peder* (personal name). Dimensions of bricks work out at 25-30 × 12-14 × 7-10 cm. — Bind-runes are not indicated in the above transliterations.

(Brøns, Hviding, Ravsted) and two in North Jutland (Egvad, Gammelsogn). Only Brøns and Egvad still have the whole of the first *æt* of the futhork along with one or two runes of the second; the other churches provide no more than two to four runes apiece. In Brøns we also find the name of the carpenter, þṛṛ R | ʀ, i.e. thidrik — something in between Nordic *Þiðrik* and Low German *Didrik* or *Tidrik* and a form that is quite natural in South Jutland [8]. — The o-runes are sometimes shaped ʀ, sometimes ʁ.

Another interesting and exciting instance of such runes is found in South Jutland, where they are used to number the work of a woodcarver and so ought to be called “woodcarver’s runes”. The first five runes of the futhork occur on *the reliefs depicting the Passion in Hyrup church*, South Jutland, probably carved about 1250 [9]:

ʀ Ṛ Ḃ ʁ R

- *439 *Inscriptions in bricks* have as much right to be counted “building” inscriptions as those on woodwork. Both were cut or incised while the craftsmen were at work outside the church — the brick kilns were often right up against the walls. — DaRun includes ten inscriptions on the large bricks called “monk-stones” in Denmark. Two of them contain only a single name: peder (*Ravnkilde*, North Jutland) and ketil (*Øm monastery*, Jutland). *Lösen brick 4* (Blekinge) has eko sum lapis on it — I am a (the) stone — while others have futhork fragments. To them may be added the next great runological joke, the brick from *Søborg church* in North Sjælland. It was earlier read and interpreted as þæn f yrsæ — with f standing for “fair”, so “the beautiful Yrsa” entered the annals. The detached observer could reasonably ask however whether f might not equally well stand for “fiendish” — and whether the rune-writer was not introducing us to a damned or devilish Yrsa. In fact, both suggestions are misplaced: the inscription merely says: þæn fyrstæ — the first [brick].

In 1959 a new runic brick was found in the splendid brick-built church at *Nørre Løgum*, South Jutland, erected not later

Station of the Cross stone(?). Køng, Fyn. For another explanation, see text. The stone itself measures 33 × 27.5 cm. Such stones had relief-cut scenes from Jesus's path to Golgatha, one for each of the fourteen times he stopped on the way. They are still a regular feature in Catholic churches, though now usually painted pictures. Two stones are preserved at Køng: one of Jesus on the road to Calvary (carrying the cross?), with runes, and one of him on the cross with Mary on one side, St John on the other. The inscription was damaged on purpose and the remaining runes make no sense.



454

than the first half of the thirteenth century. Before it was fired someone had scratched in the damp clay (note the late unsymmetrical s-rune, cf. Poulsker and †Boeslunde):

419 444

tihlsten — in modern Danish, teglsten — brick.

CHURCH FURNISHINGS WITH RUNES

Pause in the doorway as we enter the church and we often find that door-jamb and lintel and even the decorated tympanum above have their runic marks: seldom an edifying message, usually a craftsman's name. The *leaves and fittings of the doors* themselves also provided a welcome surface for the scribbling mania of cleric and craftsman – we have certainly lost a great wealth of such inscriptions with the disappearance of our oldest churches, the stave-churches. All we have now is one iron hinge bearing a very fragmentary inscription, but written records tell us of two more. The lost *door of the chapter-house in Slesvig* was richly decked and had ironwork runes saying: æfli me [f]jecit, Evli made me (the door is speaking). The similarly lost door of the church at *Östra Sönnarslöv, Skåne*, had an inscription which is even worse preserved than the Jutish example mentioned below, but at least the word “God” can be made out. The North Jutland *Lønborg hinge*, on the other hand, perhaps contained a devout utterance and the craftsman's “guarantee”: . . . a hin dyr . . .

The *church-bell* is not perhaps exactly a furnishing, especially when – as in the early period – it hung in its own belfry in the churchyard – as in Italian campaniles still today, not to mention here and there in South Jutland and Lolland where timber belfries are still the custom. But churches and bells are inseparable, so we include them here.

Vikings were not keen on church-bells and their tinkling clatter (early bells were not very large), and for wizards and warlocks they were an abomination. The Latin inscription in minuscule roman script on a bell at Jydstrup (Sjælland), made as late as 1463, more or less says it all: *Vocor Maria demonum victrix melodia* – I am called Mary, vanquisher of demons by my melody. A Swedish church-bell (Saleby in Västergötland) has the magic word *agla* followed by Ave Maria, often used as a protective charm.

*443

Only one Danish bell with runes is preserved, from *Hæstrup* in Jutland. It contains the Ave Maria complete, followed by Eskil – doubtless the name of the bell-founder – and then the beginning of the Ave once more.



Hæstrup church-bell, North Jutland. 70 cm high including the head-mount. — This beautiful bell, now one of the National Museum's prized possessions, gives the name of the bell-founder and the complete Hail Mary. Not without mistakes for Eskil probably could not read runes. Reverse runes and "stump" runes: + akemaria : kpaciaplēna : tominus · tikumbeneēediktāu : in : muliær(i)bus : æp : bēnetiktus : fruktus | fentrikis : tui : iskil (and with "stump" runes:) afemaria : kr

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Four other bells now lost are also recorded with runic inscriptions. A 1638 report from the parson at *Jetsmark* in North Jutland says that the bell had “the following words in runic letters, earlier rendered as: Hanc tibi campanam Nicolae dicamus habendam” — we give this bell for you to have, Nicholas — indubitably St Nicholas of Myra whom we have met in the words and picture of the Gesing inscription. Perhaps the Jetsmark inscription really was in runes but in the seventeenth century to call any old or unfamiliar script “runes” was not uncommon. It must also be considered dubious whether Danes of the renaissance period could generally read runes — the real key was provided by Ole Worm’s *Danicorum monumentorum libri sex* of 1643. It will have been noticed that the Jetsmark inscription makes a hexameter.

The lost bell at *Rudkøbing* on Langeland is also credited with a runic inscription, but since we do not know what it is supposed to have said, we are even more in the dark than with the Jetsmark example. But there is no doubt about the next two bells because we have drawings of their runes.

†*Boeslunde church-bell*, Sjøælland, in runes written from right to left:

+ : frater : (t)oco : æfsa : kør(i) : mik : frat(e)r : inkæma[r]u[s]
srips in : campana

Brother Toke Efsa (?) made me. Brother Ingemar wrote on the bell.

We meet here the late s-forms already seen on the Nørre Løgum brick and the St Paul figure in Poulsker. — Toke was probably a lay-brother, Ingemar monastery schooled.

†*Hardeberga church-bell*, Skåne:

pær krucis ok sihnum : fgiað : | : prokul : omne : malihnum +
By this sign of the cross all evil shall flee far away.

The sign of the cross is here inscribed under the Latin hexameter line. — The same sentence is often used in charms against sickness. — Note the absence of initial h in ok = hoc = this. Scanian inscriptions of the Viking Age show several examples



Stokkemærke reliquary, Lolland. 6 cm long. — Our youngest “historical” inscription from the time when runes still flourished naturally in Denmark. It says: *æpiskopus gisiko* — Bishop Gisike — bishop of Odense 1286-1304. It was a bishop’s duty to provide sacred relics to be enshrined in the altars he consecrated. Did Gisike scratch these runes himself or at least provide the copy from which they were made?

446

of loss of initial *h* (and there may be one on the Jutish Skern stone?). On the *ð*-rune see the Give glass-pane.

*426

Once inside the church, we look first towards the altar. In the romanesque period, c. 1050-1250 — when runes probably flourished as never before or since — there was little in the way of furniture in the nave where the congregation assembled — nothing indeed but the masonry benches along the walls (you could bring your own cushion and there was no heating) and that “portal” to Christ’s Church, the font. The priest and his acolytes had their place in the chancel, separated from the nave by a lattice-work screen or a pulpit-gallery. In the chancel stood the altar, either a solid block surmounted by a granite slab or a slab resting like a table-top on one or more stout granite legs. In a hollowed-out section of the altar-slab was the reliquary, containing relics of saints, usually bones or bits of bones (and not without a mixture sometimes of bones from poultry, pigs or sheep). Originally, only a cross stood on the altar. The sacred vessels were kept in a wall-cupboard (Gullev) or in a free-standing monstrance. The censer hung on a hook on the wall or stood in a niche in the altar. The processional crosses stood at the side on “pedestals” with suitable

430

holes to take the cross-shafts — as we have seen them pictured on gravestones.

As mementos of the rune-inscribed church furnishings of the middle ages we have a reliquary and a number of thuribles. The latter are from c. 1250; they have the maker's name and whatever else he fancied writing on them. The reliquary inscription belongs with the latest medieval runes we possess — in all probability from after 1300:

- 445 *Stokkemarkre reliquary*, Lolland:
æpiskōpus ṽ gisiko — Bishop Gisike

Gisike (the inscription's form is latinised) was bishop of Odense 1286–1304. It was a bishop's duty to consecrate a new or rebuilt church, and to the ceremony he would bring a small lead box containing holy relics wrapped in fine silk to place in the "sepulchre" prepared for them in the altar [10]. Before doing so, he scratched his name or had it scratched in runes in the lead. Thus both the altar and the inscription are dated.

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Ulbolle censer, Fyn. The vessel is 21 cm high. — One of the twelve known rune-inscribed censers made by Master Jakob Red of Svendborg. It appears from the inscription that this was a gift to the church from the maker for the soul of his wife, Merete, who had recently died. Master Jakob also includes a prayer for himself, an Ave Maria, and at the end these incomprehensible runes: *ebmyæflnhi* (perhaps secret runes of some kind). The picture on the facing page shows a cast of the inscription.



Censers. Twelve rune-inscribed censers are known, all from the same Svendborg workshop and all made by the same master, Jakob Red. (In Lutheran times, after censuring was given up in church services, the thuribles were called “fire-pots” because they were used to carry live embers in.) The inscriptions, usually abounding in errors, are in either Danish or Latin and use many abbreviations and bind-runes. They all contain the master-formula along with a sacred name or devotional phrase. One of these censers found its way to Norway (Tjømme), another (Svinninge) has disappeared.

Hesselager censer, Fyn:

+ mæstær : iakop : ryp : afsinnæbuuhr : goraē · mik : gesus krist

Master Jakob Red of Svendborg made me. Jesus Christ.

The inscription on the *Hundstrup censer* is simply: *magistær røþ*; that on the *Kullerup censer* + *gesus krt* (which doubtless stands for *kristus*). The *Heden example* has Master Red followed by *kras dābōr toto diæ sikue āgo kotidie* – tomorrow I shall be fed all the day and so I work daily.

*446 *447 *Ulbølle censer, Fyn:*

+ *mæs[tær iakob ry]þ* : *gørpæ* : *mik: hān* : *gifær* : *mik* : *þæn* |
 + *hæl* : *rik* · *k* · *??????tkr* · *kær* : *hus* : *rkø* : *mærutæ* : *siul* :
guþ : *sihnn* : | *þæn* : *mik* : *kørpæ* : *æue mariagrāsia* : *plena* :
domīn : *tikum* · | *bentik* : *ta tū* : *in* : *mlieri* : *ibus* : *ebmyæflnhi*
 Master Jakob Red made me. He gives me [to some church or other] for the soul of his dear wife, Merete. God bless him who made me. Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.

The runes that come at the end are incomprehensible: probably it is a sequence of secret runes in a code we have not yet broken.

Fonts make the largest group of church furnishings with runes on them. Seventeen font inscriptions are known to us, one of them lost.

432 If we disregard the fixed benches along the walls, we can say that the font was the only object to be found in the nave of a romanesque church. It stood either more or less in the middle of the nave (cf. *Måløv*), on a tall pedestal – just as one sees it still in Gotland churches – or, more commonly, at the west end, as near the door as possible; the latter site gave devils and devilry as little chance as possible to slip in with the unbaptised infant, even though the priest undertook an exorcism before the babe was actually allowed into the church, or gave the exorcised devil a chance to escape through the (North) door which was sometimes called the “devil’s door”. One might consequently expect to find inscriptions referring to the sacrament of baptism, or reliefs on the sides and pedestal showing devils and angels (what the infant was and what it would become) – but this is not the case on the Danish fonts. The Åkirkeby font on Bornholm is richly decorated, but it is an import



Six fonts with runic inscriptions. 1. Hoptrup (South Jutland): imi (personal name). — 2. Selde (North Jutland): not interpreted. — 3. Lyngby (North Jutland): kup (God). — 4. Ørum (North Jutland): Niels made me (in Latin). — 5. Egense (Fyn): Astred son of ikkreus (iakreus?) (Latin). — 6. Handbjerg (North Jutland): isli (personal name).

450
451 450
450
450
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450

from Gotland and furnished with a long caption text in Gotlandic. The fonts found in Jutland and the islands west of Øresund are sparingly ornamented. *Bårse* and *Egense* are richest, with alternate lily and cross (*Egense* has an undulating vine as well), *Brøndum* has a little foliage, *Handbjerg* crosses and “sepals”, *Ørum* and *Lyngby* arches – those at *Lyngby* containing symbols to suit everybody: swastika, tetragram, tree of life, sun and moon, and the word *kup* = God in runes. *Bårse* has an inscription with the name of the master and the donor in roman majuscules and with the golden numbers in runes – calendar runes.

All the fonts in Skåne [11], five of them from the same workshop, have the same abundant palmette decoration and the same inscription on the lip of the basin:

+ marten : mik : giarpe + – Martin made me (the word-order is Latin).

*451 *Hör font* is especially interesting because Master Martin provides a self-portrait on it: he can be seen among the ornament on the left with his long beard and conical workman's hat.

The same master-formula but in Latin is found on the font at *Ørum*, North Jutland: *me feciþ nikotaus* (for *nikolaus*), Nicholas made me. Three Jutland fonts, *Hoptrup*, *Brøndum* and *Handbjerg*, have only bare signatures: *imi* (Imme, runes in relief), *asær* (Asser), *isli* (Isle). The font at *Egense*, Fyn, is embellished with runes cut in relief round the cylindrical shaft: *astret : ikkrei : filius*, where the second word is genitive of a latinised *Ikkreus* or, if we are bold enough to read the first *k* as *a*, *Iakreus*. Since neither name is known (*Iakreus* can hardly be Danish *Jager*), we can do no more than translate the inscription as: *Astred*, son of *I*. [made the font]. Apart from the odd name of the father, one may also wonder at the second *t* in the son's name. If his name was *Astred* (taken in its turn to be the same name as *Astrapr* on the *Skovlænge* stone), we should expect final *þ*. We note too the late *a*-form with its side-stroke almost at the top of the stave.

Interpretation of the inscription on the last of the Jutland



Bårse font, Sjælland. The bowl is 70 cm in diameter. — Name of maker and patron in roman capitals, with “calendar” runes below. 452

On the right and below: the Hör font, Skåne. The bowl is 84.5 cm in diameter. — One of the five rune-inscribed fonts made by Master Martin. They all say the same: *marten mik gearþe*, Martin made me, with the font doing the talking. The little head under a conical workman’s cap seen among the palmettes on the left is certainly the mastermason’s likeness. The illustration below shows the inscription. 450



fonts, the one at *Selde*, is a more painful business still. The carver’s bind-runes and same-stave runes leave us mystified as to the sequence we should read them in. *449

Selde font:

+ guþlif · grēnifn̄ · rēlkafenat
or ēr nf̄ ērlofanet

We can echo some of the rune-writers and say: “Read the runes who can!” We cannot even presume to decide whether *guplif* is a proper name or not.

*451 *Bårse font*, Sjælland:

BONDO FRISO ME FECIT | ESGERVS RØTH ME FECIT :
FIERI

Bonde Fris made me. Esger Red had me made. Followed by the *golden number* series:



The golden number is the number of a year in the moon cycle of 19 years, noted in the calendar beside the dates of new moons. In a runic calendar (cut on a stick, a “prime-staff”) the numbers are represented by the sixteen letters of the futhark plus three new symbols (called *arlaus*, *tvimaþr* and *bælgþorn* – the last ones in the series pictured above). *Bårse font*, dated to the second half of the thirteenth century, offers the oldest Scandinavian example of the calendar runes; the next we know is a Gotlandic specimen from 1328 [12]. The symbols *arlaus* and *tvimaþr* also occur on Øster Marie stone 6 on Bornholm.

319

*453 As was mentioned above, the *Åkirkeby font* is an import from Gotland, made and signed by Master Sigráf some time in the twelfth century, one of the finest of all the fine fonts to come from his workshop. In eleven arcades around the outside of the basin are scenes from the life of Christ, and in the trefoil arch above each is a runic caption in Gotlandic. The inscriptions of the first two panels may serve to illustrate the language:

(1) þita : ir : santigabrel : ok : sehpi : santa mari(a) : at han sku (2) ldi : barn : (f)ypa : þita : ir : elizabep : ok : maria : ok : hailsas

This is St Gabriel and [he] told St Mary that she should bear a child. — This is Elizabeth and Mary and [they] salute each other.



Akirkeby font, Bornholm. Gotland sandstone. Diameter of the bowl 81 cm. — Imported from Gotland where it was made by Master Sigraf who has signed it as his work. Eleven panels portray scenes from the New Testament, from the Annunciation to the Crucifixion. The picture on the far left here shows the Annunciation, Elisabeth and Mary, the Nativity and two of the Magi. The runes in the ribbons of the arches are captions to the pictures, e.g. over the Nativity: *hiar huilis maria sum han barn fydi skapera himiz ok iorþar sum os leysti* (Here Mary rests where she bore her child, the creator of heaven and earth, who redeemed us). The language is Gotlandic (han means “she”).

452

The two scenes are of the Annunciation and Visitation. The small capitals *N* and *L* used here represent dotted runes with special meanings (see DaRun col. 962 f., 965).

- *441 *A Station of the Cross stone?* Two badly damaged limestone reliefs — they were defaced on purpose — are preserved in *Køng church*, Fyn. One of them — with runes — apparently depicted Jesus on his way to Golgatha, the other Jesus on the cross with Mary and John on either side. They are supposed to be the sad remains of the seven or fourteen scenes the church once had, marking the Stations of the Cross, the places where Jesus stopped on his way to be crucified. But since Station of the Cross images are not known in Denmark in romanesque times, the two reliefs more probably belonged to a Passion in the style of Hyrup. The greater part of the inscription below the relief has been cut away with an axe or knife (in some excess of puritan zeal?) and only the first four runes remain: *kotæ* — followed by a sign that looks like a Primitive Norse *a*-runes with a very long side-stroke, and perhaps a short *s*-runes after that. — No interpretation.
- 440

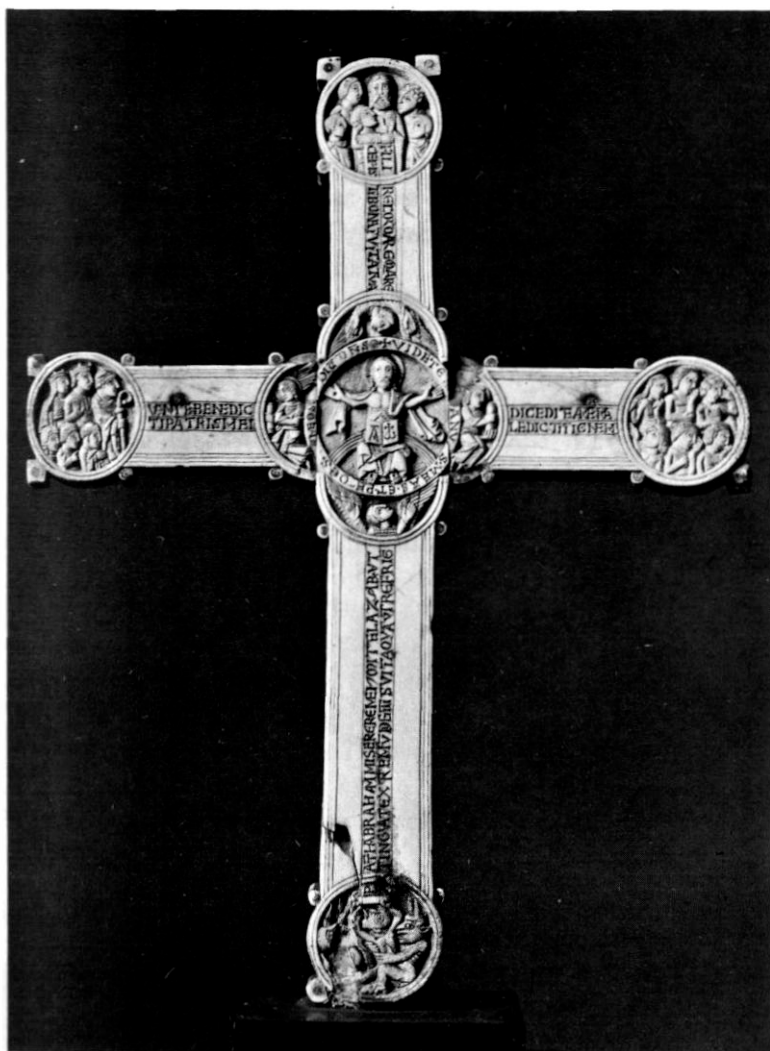
How common and everyday runes were at one time appears from the inscription on a rood-loft (pulpitum) that once divided nave and chancel in *Listerby church*, Blekinge. The woodwork itself has long since disappeared and we only know it from Jon Skonvig's drawing. We can see from his copy that two craftsmen had been at work:

touæ : giorþæ : mik : ok : niklif : mik : | to(u)æ | gorþæ : mik : | moruþ

Tue made me and Niklev (?) me. Tue made me. Maria (?).

Skonvig left no notes on the age and appearance of this rood-loft. It seems to have been removed at some time in the middle of the eighteenth century.

- *455 One of the loveliest treasures of the National Museum in Copenhagen is the *Gunhild cross*, made about 1100 or later. It is carved in morse (walrus tusk), the ivory of the Norsemen, with a wealth of relief work and long contemporaneous inscriptions in roman majuscules with one short runic insert. For detailed information on the cross and its history refe-



Gunhild cross. From the back. Walrus ivory. 29 × 22 cm. — The majuscule inscriptions are mostly captions to the reliefs, but on one side of the vertical arm and the underside of the left arm the name gunhild is written in runes and with it in Latin and in majuscules: He who sees me shall pray to Christ for Helena, daughter of Sven Magnus, who had me made. On the other side of the vertical arm and the corresponding underside of the cross arm another Latin inscription in majuscules says: They who believe in Christ crucified shall remember Liutger in their prayers, who carved me at the behest of Helena who is also named Gunhild.

454

rence may be made to DaRun nr 413, figs. 1020–25 and Harald Langberg [13]. Here I shall only mention that the inscription on the righthand side of the shaft enjoins the reader to pray for the soul of the owner of the crucifix, Gunhild, daughter of King Sven Estridsson, also called Helena. The inscription on the lefthand side asks for prayers for the carver, Liutger (cf. Ulbølle censer). Only the name gun(h)ild is written in runes: ƿ ƚ ʀ * | ʀ 1 — all the rest is in roman lettering. Neither Gunhild nor Liutger are known from other sources.

Before we leave ecclesiastical objects and church furnishings we must refer to *two ivory reliefs*, made c. 1000 and of Byzantine workmanship, because at some later stage they were embellished with runic inscriptions. *One of them*, a crucifixion group, has simply the word *iesus*; the other is more interesting:

Ivory relief nr 2, Deutches Museum, Berlin:

t · þ · i · m · n · h · a · l · a · s · n · o · b · n · h · rake

This remarkable inscription can be put into comprehensible Danish if we take the 16-letter futhark (ʀ = o, ʌ = y) and replace each individual rune by the one following it in the series (cf. on secret runes above). The result:

boalin systir min rake — Boalin my sister. Rakke (?) [cut].

OBJECTS WITH “SECULAR” INSCRIPTIONS

Inscriptions on medieval objects that are not directly connected with churches or religious ceremony often have a magical purpose or some magical association. But it is not always easy to decide where the line is to be drawn between the magical and the devout. In the middle ages sickness was often regarded as a form of demonic possession, best combated by the sign of the cross, a passage of scripture or a charm. It was the same among the Jews in Jesus’s day. When Ave Maria is engraved and chased on a sword-pommel — is that piety or magic? Magic in the sense that this “formula” was meant to ward off evil from the sword’s owner? And does “ave ma” on a knife-haft have the same significance as it does on the sword?

Lund bone 1, Skåne.
17.5 cm. With runes not
so far interpreted: bri'tiæ
iærlæ fol.



460

Lund bone 4, Skåne.
16 cm. Side A (below)
announces that Bonde
cut "speech" runes,
while Side B (top) in-
forms us: The eagle's
oars are (its) feathers. Is
it an exercise or a coded
message?



460

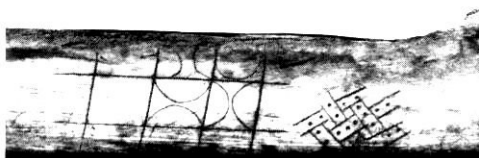


Lund bone 8, Skåne.
15 cm. This is Side A
with the mystifying runes
tutaporere. Side B has
secret runes on it (see
below).



460

Lund bone 10, Skåne.
24 cm long and approxi-
mately 2 cm wide. Side
A has the first seven charac-
ters of the futhork (slight-
ly confused) while Side
B has the patterns illu-
strated here.



460

Lund bone 8, Skåne.
Cast of the secret runes,
made by Thora Fisker.



460

Inscriptions of the type: Peter made me or used me or owns me — are not nearly so common.

Some inscriptions on articles announce what the object is or what it is called. Some are the scribbles of novices practising their runes.

Lund has a “culture layer” of black earth some 5–6 metres thick and this has proved our richest source of “secular” objects with runes — though poor enough in comparison with the finds — nearly 600 of them — from Bergen. In addition to the dozen medieval inscriptions of this type from Lund recorded in DaRun nr 300–310, the city has now disgorged more than a score: on bone, on wood (including a walking-stick) on leather (scabbards) and a fragment of brick — and more will come. To give some perspective, I may note that we know only two medieval pieces from Roskilde, two from Ribe, one from Ålborg, none from Århus (though we have a Viking Age comb from there), and ten from Slesvig, Hedeby’s medieval successor. One of the Slesvig inscriptions is on another walking-stick. There are some others whose authors do not mince their words.

*399 The alphabet inscriptions from Lund were reproduced above along with other medieval futhorks. It will be observed that the alphabets on bone-pieces 6 [14] and 12 — as opposed to that on bone 2 — do not contain a single medieval rune-form (the same is true of a futhork on a rib-bone found in Novgorod); a and n have the forms † and ‡ , not ↓ and ‡ , and t has the double-topped † , not the medieval † (bone 2 also has † for t and the normal Viking Age h , not ’ , for s). This is to say
358 that the runes match the forms on the Lund weaving-tablet which belongs linguistically to Period 2, the Viking Age. Archaeologists assign (cf. nr 19) Lund bone-piece 12 to the end of the eleventh century or the beginning of the twelfth, but a runologist must prefer a date in the eleventh century in view
426 of the fact that Lund has an inscription from c. 1080 with medieval a, ↓ (on a double capital in the gallery of the cathedral tower).

Bits of the runic alphabet occur on other new finds. A rib-
*399 bone, *Lund bone-piece 7* [15], discovered in 1961, has only
*399 V N and one other rune. *Lund bone-piece 10* [16], found in 1974, has the first seven letters of the futhork, the last four

13 


14 

15 


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Lund bones 13-27. C. 1:2. 15 and 20 with part of a (corrupt) futhork, 23 perhaps an attempt at 19 or a preliminary attempt. 16 and 17 contain mere scribble. 21 and 24 are "naughty" (cf. p. 464 and Lund bones 32, 33 and 34 in Table of inscriptions). 26 possibly magic. Note of these inscriptions is fully understandable. Drawings by Maria Cinthio, Lund.

of them in corrupt form. On the concave side the bone has a specimen of plaited decoration and another made of opposing semi-circles in a network of squares. Finally, the runes . . . $\mathfrak{N}\mathfrak{F}\mathfrak{I}(\mathfrak{R})$. . . on a lump of brick [17], found in 1944, must be presumed to be the remains of a medieval futhork.

Lund bone-piece 10 may be the fumbling trial-piece of a beginner, and the same is perhaps true of *bone-piece 3* with the inscription:

binisþitabinisþt(a) – (a) bone is this, (a) bone is this

where the inscriber forgot one rune and is thoroughly confused at the end, cf. nr 14 with: ossa, i.e. bone in Latin.

We have to confess that no one so far has made sense of *Lund bone-piece 1*:

bri', tiæ : iærlæ : fol

nor of *Lund bone-piece 8* [18], found in 1969, with runes on both sides – regular medieval runes on the one (but t is T) and secret runes on the other: tutaporerer – not interpreted.

Three other inscriptions not interpreted, and not likely to be, are on *Lund bone-piece 5* [19], found in 1945, with three faint signs – one of them clearly an m-rune – and half a cross, on *Lund bone-piece 9* [20], found in 1971, with the runes sia, and on *Lund bone-piece 11* [21], found in 1973, with the runes ni (or in).

In contrast, *Lund bone-piece 4*, a rib-bone with runes on both sides, has an inscription easy to read and translate – though perhaps not so easy to understand:

bondi × ris × ti × mal × runu × || arar × ara × æru × fiaprar
Bonde cut “speech-runes”. The oars of the eagle are the feathers.

In later Icelandic *málrúnar* meant “plain-language runes”, as opposed to secret or cryptic runes – but there seems no reason why Bonde should not have been content to write simply runu in his inscription. The bit about the “eagle’s oars” may be from a rhyme or rigmarole. The whole thing may be a sort of school exercise.

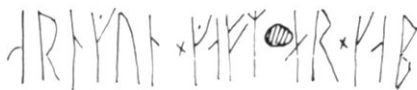
Excavations in 1980 and 1981 produced another dozen or so runic bones, most with inscriptions in the style of nr 8 above – i.e. unintelligible (to us) – or mere scrawls containing runes or rune-like marks (16 and 17). Of the “meaningless”

Lund comb 3, Skåne.
23 cm. — Size and shape
make it plain that this
comb is as old as it pos-
sibly can be in Lund —
i.e. from the period of its
foundation by Knut the
Great early in the
eleventh century. The
runes are not medieval
(as assumed in DaRun)
but belong to the Viking
Age — that means in this
case that they are stut-
runes. Like the Århus
comb, the inscription
contains an English per-
sonal name, iatrink,
Eadrinc.



466

361



Lund comb 1, Skåne. 18 cm. — Unlike comb nr 3, this example and
the runes on it are both of medieval type. The inscription is: arngun gaf
mær kab — Arngun gave me the comb — but who the recipient was and
who had the runes written is not told.

466

kind which may represent coded or secret runes *nr 15* may
serve as an example:

*459

Side A: koiphluialit po

Side B: fkokþrk po

Side B evidently contains a corrupt futhork (so does *bone-
piece 20*: fupokr). And one must enquire — of oneself if no
one wiser is available — whether the twice-written po may be
the name *Pá* (West Norse *pái*, peacock) which is on *Lund
glove-needle 3* (read the runes which Pá cut). If it is, it is a
good example of the development of long a to å — [a:] to [ɔ:]
— and an early example too, for the oblique strokes of both the

*459

a- and o-rune transect the stave in the older fashion. Archaeological dating: twelfth century.

Bone-piece 19 is also among the older examples, even though an uncertain archaeological dating says eleventh century, for here the oblique strokes of the a- and n-rune cut through the stave; and e is a dotted rune:

Side A: kuuunkastitub – no interpretation

Side B: knif · melti : – the knife spoke (said)

*459 The Side A inscription, but only the beginning of it, reappears on *bone-piece 23* (archaeological dating: eleventh century):

. . . kuuunka |||

This ought to imply that these runes, in just this order, are not casual but significant – of what we do not know – and we shall need to find a good many more rune sticks before we are in a position to “read” runes like these.

*459 *Bone-piece 21* is possibly a “naughty” inscription:

. . . itonkugi : uratfunti

The runes before the division mark can be split up in various ways, but the second group can only be two words: urat (vrat) funti. A verb *vratte* meant to push, wriggle, shake. The word funti is dative singular either of *funt*, a font, or of *fundr*, a meeting or encounter (of any kind – friendly, hostile, sexual).

*459 *Bone-piece 25* is irritating because the inscription is perfectly legible but only two words in it can be confidently interpreted. We learn that “Sibbe sits” but where or why is not at all clear:

Side A: sibi : sitr : m(i)þ : asa

Side B: fur : asau

This is one of the earliest group; the old a-rune with the oblique stroke through the stave has not yet acquired the value æ. Archaeological dating: eleventh century.



Lincoln comb-case, England. 13.5 cm. — It must be counted doubtful whether this belongs to Period 2 or Period 3. There is certainly nothing medieval about the runes, which tell us that Thorfast made a good comb (the one that was once in the case). 466



Lund comb 4, Skåne. 27.5 cm. This remarkably large comb contains a futhark with fifteen runes — the þ-rune is forgotten — and the name, Thorkæl, doubtless the owner. Photo: Lennart Larsen. 466

Bone-piece 22, with the same kind of a with the oblique stroke through the stave and with the nasalised ą-rune answering to a (archaeological dating: eleventh century), is notable because the two halves of the inscription are upside down in relation to each other. One would be inclined to think that the big runes were written first but the sense seems to show that this was not the case: *459

[big runes] uakan : luh : [small runes] fa : nu : þa

It is too hazardous to propose a translation.

Lund bone-piece 24 is inscribed:
fuþtramrhnkib

*459

This very interesting inscription comes from an eleventh-century layer, and its age is confirmed by the use of the *r*-rune still for *r* (and not for *y* as in later medieval times). The inscription falls naturally into three parts:

fup tramr hnkib

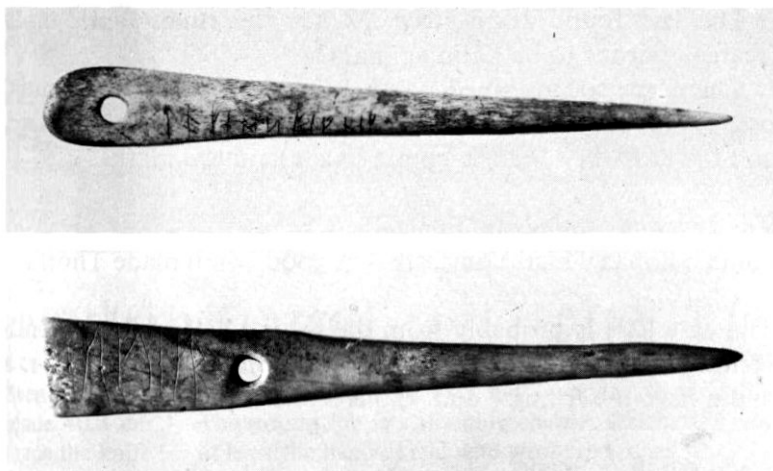
The first is easily recognised as the word for female genitalia which we have met in a number of inscriptions. The second word, *tramr*, means a troll or demon. Put the two words together and you have a rather vigorous expression. The last sequence ends in *b*, which may suggest it is incomplete. *hnkib* is meaningless as it stands, but if we take the *n*-rune to be an error for an *a*-rune (a very common confusion), we may find some method in it after all. For *haki* can be read as the present subjunctive (here optative) of the verb *haga*, to arrange, contrive (particularly in a suitable and convenient way). *Fuptramr* is thus to fix things nicely for an object beginning with *b* – doubtless a girl called Bothild or Brynhild or Brigida.

*459 *Bone-piece 26* is inscribed on both sides:

Side A: . . . arþi? × meþ × hesti × ƿōpa . . .

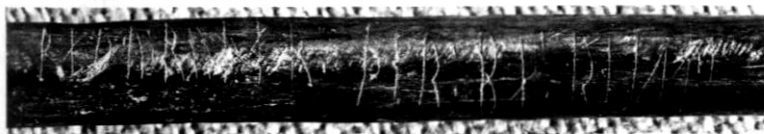
Side B: . . . hki × sbata × arkr × . . .

The first line appears to say that someone or other ploughed with a red horse. The second line is obscure. The word *sbata* can be from *spat*, a German loan-word referring to an ailment in a horse's leg (English spavin); and *arkr* can hardly be anything but the adjective *argr* which we have met before (on the Swedish Saleby stone, for instance), but what its precise meaning here may be – womanish, perverse, harmful, wizardly – must wait on interpretation of the whole inscription. – The *a*-rune occurs five times: four times in the old form with the oblique stroke transecting the stave, and once, in *ropa*, in the later form with the oblique stroke only on one side of the stave. Archaeological dating: 1100–1150. The more runic bones we recover, the more we shall learn about the transition from the Viking Age 16-rune futhark to the runic alphabet of the middle ages.



Top: Lund glove-needle 1, Skåne. 12.9 cm. — The words *tofana skefnig* means the *skefnigr* — the technical term for such a needle — of Anne (a man's name) Tueson. 468

Bottom: the Ålborg glove-needle, North Jutland. 11.5 cm. — The inscription reads. *skefnigr* (with preserved nominative marker -r). — It is perhaps quite natural to write the name “glove-needle” on a glove-needle or “yarn-twister” on a “yarn-twister” (possibly not everyone was familiar with their appearance and purpose) or “brick” on a brick (when a brick was still a novelty) — but it seems a little superfluous to us nowadays to inscribe the word “plane” on a plane or “comb” on a comb. 470



Lund glove-needle 3, Skåne. Much magnified. The inscription — of a common glove type — says: *rapu runar per ba risti* — read (interpret) the runes which Pá cut. Photograph: Kulturhistoriska Museet, Lund. 470



Lund glove-needle 4, Skåne. The 13.1 cm long needle, with a triangular grip, is handsomely polished. The slender runes are carved in a panel of the grip and give us once again a corrupt futhork: *fuprkhainsl*, i.e. *† a*, *† n*, *† l*, instead of *† n*, *† a*, *† t* (ought to be *†*) — all common errors. Photo: Lennart Larsen. 470

The last found *bone-piece* 27 has the runes: æ̅ani : mm̅ā̅
(scarcely meant to be Latin anima?).

There are six inscribed *combs*. One has a master-formula, one a donor's formula, two a name, one a futhork and a name, and the last (the Lilla Isie comb, Skåne) aimless marks.

*463 *The Lincoln comb-case*, England:

kamb : kopan : kiari : þorfastr — A good comb made Thorfast.

The case [22] is probably from the second half of the eleventh century. The name has preserved the nominative ending -r; a and n have the forms ʀ and ʁ; o is ʃ.

*461 *Lund comb 1*, Skåne:

arngun × (g)af (×) mæx kab — Arngun gave me the comb

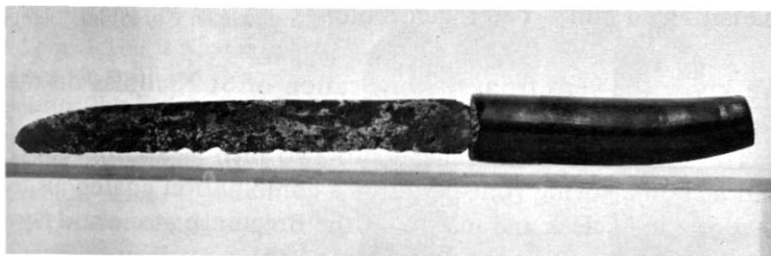
The writer omits m in *kamb*, following old runic practice (cf. the Elisenhof comb, which has however nasalised a).

Lund comb 2 has only three runes preserved: . . . nus, probably the end of the name Magnus.

*461 *Lund comb 3* has an English name on it (like the Århus comb): *Eadrinc*, written iatrink. But since the inscription is possibly in stut-runes and therefore anterior to Period 3, it has been discussed above.

*463 *Lund comb 4* is uncommonly large, 25 cm long and originally some 30 cm. It came to light when foundations were being dug in 1980. It is of the usual type with a segmented plate inserted between connecting plates, one of which had the *medieval futhork* inscribed on it. We find m before l, the a- and n-runes have the oblique stroke on one side of the stave only, t has a double top; the oblique strokes of the o-rune do not transect the stave but that is certainly because of the adjacent rivet — the strokes go upward on the left side; the third rune, þ, has been forgotten. The futhork is followed by þorkæl (the oblique strokes of the o-rune now transect the stave), doubtless the name of the owner (cf. *FestskrGlob*, I, 1981, pp. 184ff.).

*467 We have three *knives* with rune-inscribed hafts. A knife from *Lund* has this on it:



ᚠᚱᚦᚱᚱᚱ ᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱ ᚱᚱ ᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱ ᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱ

Svendborg knife, Fyn. The handle is 11.3 cm long; length including blade 40.8 cm. — The inscription is a rhyming couplet which tells who made the knife (or at least the handle) and who wrote the runes. 468



Lund knife-haft, Skåne. Just over 10 cm. — Side A has in runes: pætar gæd min — Peter, guard me. Side B has some unintelligible runes while runes on Side C repeat the owner's name, pætar (ar made as a bind-rune). 466

Åstrup knife-haft, Lolland. 4.7 cm. long. The beginning of Ave Maria.



468

Ribe steelyard handle, North Jutland. 9.5 cm. — When something was weighed in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost — which is what the runic inscription says in Latin — accuracy was assured.



474

pætær : gæd min — Peter, guard me!

We know the verb from the invocation of St Nicholas on the Gesing stone.

The next knife introduces us to two men — a knife-cutler and a rhyme-loving rune-writer — a combination analogous to that of parish clerk and mason on the Bregninge stone and lay-brother and monk on the †Boeslunde bell.

*467 *Svendborg knife*, Fyn:

[ka]rl märke sg? aū hæftæ aræ læ(k)æpe sgæ (ft) [æ]
Karl cut his mark on the haft; Are extended the shaft.

A nice little end-rhyming couplet. — In the same way as the writer omitted m before b in kab (*kamb*) on Lund comb 1, so Karl omitted n before k in læ(k)æpe, literally “lengthened”. It is one way of thinking of knife-manufacture: you extend the handle by fitting a blade in it.

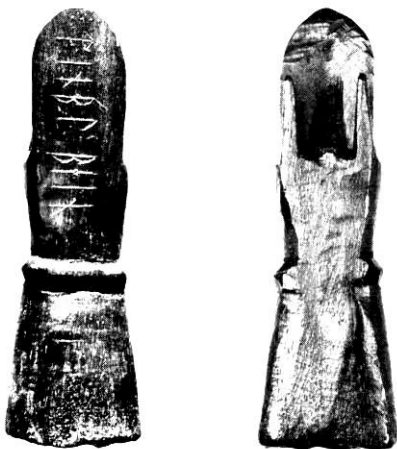
*467 *Åstrup knife*, Lolland: in fact, all that remains is a small bone plate from the handle with the start of Ave Maria on it: aue : ma.

For making gloves a special needle was used, large and made of bone. It was called a *skæfningr* (derived from *skafa*, to shave, scrape, smooth), in modern Swedish *skämning*. We have five such needles with runes on them, four from Lund. One of these has an unintelligible inscription (mænisi) but another tells us both the technical term for such a needle and who owned it (it was a man). To remove all doubt as to this technical name for a glove-needle another example, similarly self-styled, was found in Ålborg in 1974, though here the word is in a form that may give rise to some philological speculation. The third Lund needle was found in 1975, the fourth in 1982. The way these needles were used is described by Jan Kock in Skalk 1976.

*465 *Lund glove-needle 1*, Skåne:

tofana · skefnig — Tue’s Anne’s (= Anne Tueson’s — Anne a man’s name) *skæfning*

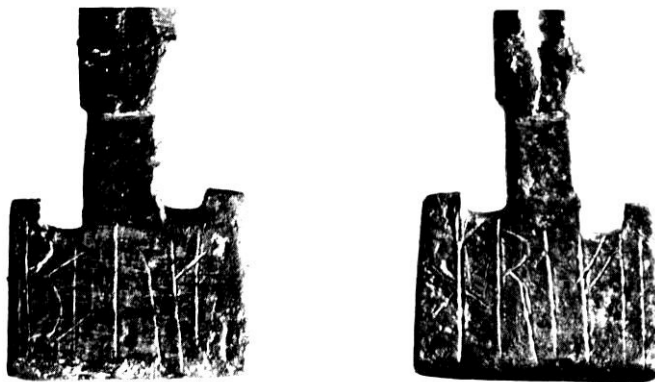
Lund “tinblbein”, Skåne.
6.5 cm. — This is what is
marked in small but clear
runes on this little instru-
ment of bone and we
presume it signifies its
technical name. It was
used for twisting yarn.



471

Dalby bronze stylus, Skåne. The flat surface on which the runes are
written is only 7 mm wide. — Side A: boui a. Side B: grifil — Bove owns
the grifil (grefil?) — the “graver” or stylus. The rune g is made by a
ligature of k- and h-runes. — A stylus is a sharp-pointed instrument for
writing or drawing on wax-tablets (cf. the Etruscan wax-tablet from
Marsiliana with the alphabet on it). At the other end, a stylus has a flat
tip which can smooth out errors or erase all the writing so that the wax
can be used again.

473



The n-rune in *ana* is dotted to signify dental n (cf. Åkirkeby font); g, with a dot in the crook of the rune, stands as so often for ng; o has the form þ; a and n have the oblique stroke on one side only (though it cuts into the stave in the case of n); s is ʁ.

- *465 *Ålborg glove-needle*, North Jutland:
 × skefnikr × — *skæfningr*, glove-needle

The writer used the short form of s, ' . — As we see, this Jutland inscription has preserved the nominative ending -r, while the Scanian example has not. The Lund 1 form has led people to believe that the word was a feminine o-stem, which would agree with the fact that in some Swedish dialects the word *skämning* is feminine. One cannot dispute the grammatical possibility, but the Ålborg find makes it more natural to regard the Lund word as masculine too, comparable not only with the Ålborg *skefningr* but also with West Norse *skafningr*, (part of a) sword, and *Skofnungr*, a sword-name (sword-names are regularly masculine in Norse). In the Lund example the word has simply lost its nominative marker.

- *465 *Lund glove-needle 3*, Skåne:
 rapu : runar : þer : ba : risti — read (i.e. interpret) the runes which På cut

The “read” formula is well known throughout Scandinavia in both the Viking Age and the medieval period. The name På (older *Pá*, *Pái*) means a peacock, but it may also be interpreted in some cases as an abbreviated form of Paulus; it occurs on runic coins and elsewhere, both as a name and a nickname. The inscription here has the old s-form, ʁ, and the old a-form, ʁ, but þ and ʁ for n and t are medieval. The use of final r instead of ʁ in runar and þer is a late feature. It puts the inscription in the twelfth century, a dating which accords with the archaeological evidence.

- *465 *Lund glove-needle 4*, Skåne:
 fuprk(h)ai(n)s(l)

Tømmerup cup, Sjælland. Silver. 5.5 cm high, found by a grave-digger at his work. Inscribed with fup and some meaningless marks, probably to be taken as the beginning of the futhork and not in any lewd sense (as on the Slesvig bone-piece 3 and elsewhere). The shape shows that it was not a domestic or portable chalice but – like the famous Jelling cup – a straight-forward snaps glass.



472

478

Lund wooden cup, Skåne. The base, 7.5–8.5 cm across, with the inscription. – Another example of an object giving its name. The top line says: bikar (ar a bind-rune) – beaker, cup. Cast taken by Maria Cinthio, Lund. I have not inspected the cup myself.



474

A corrupt futhark († for ‡). Archaeological dating: eleventh century.

Lund tinblbein, Skåne:
tinbl : bein – twining-bone

*469

This little tubular bone was used as an instrument for twisting yarn. It was found in 1961 during the so-called Thule excavation [23], in grave 316 in the burial ground associated with the stave-church that once stood there. Find circumstances point to a date in the latter half of the eleventh century. The inscrip-

tion certainly tells us the name of the instrument, but the sense is not quite transparent. The first element probably contains the word *ten* (older *tein*), twig, spindle, but whether *tenbl* is a genuine derivative or a case of miswriting we do not know. The compound is found nowhere else.

*471 *Tømmerup silver goblet, Sjælland.*

The inscription is fup plus numerous scrawls. The word *fup*
 356 has been discussed above in connection with the Haddeby
 soapstone vessel. Since this cup was found in a churchyard, it
 has been interpreted as a votive chalice; but its shape suggests
 a more natural explanation of it as a favourite drinking cup
 214 (like the Jelling cup) which they did not want to part the dead
 man from. We might alternatively assume that the inscription
 was meant to be a whole futhork, but that it proved beyond
 the silversmith's capacity.

*473 *Lund walking-stick, Skåne:*

ulfkil – Ulvkel, i.e. the name of the owner (cf. the Slesvig
 walking-stick)

This handsomely decorated stick is one of the most significant
 finds to come from the ancient seat of the archbishops of the
 North [24]. It came to light in two parts during a dig in 1966;
 put together they give an overall length of 98.5 cm. The wood
 is sycamore. The top bent part is shaped like a dragon's head
 (the tip of the snout is missing). The stick cannot be dated,
 either on runological or archaeological grounds. Judging by
 the ornament alone a cautious estimate would be c. 1025–50
 – which means we might do equally well (or perhaps better)
 to include it in Period 2.

Among many other objects – for a detailed account see Res
 mediaevales presented to Ragnar Blomqvist in 1968 – Lund
 has produced a good number of writing materials, both wax
 tablets (in which a film of wax made the writing surface) and
 styluses. One of the latter – though not from Lund but from
 Dalby, for a time Lund's rival as an ecclesiastical centre – tells
 us what people in Skåne called such an instrument:

Lund walking-stick, Skåne. 98.5 cm. Sycamore. This splendid stick takes pride of place among the recent runic finds from Lund. Along with the runes on the walking-stick from Slesvig, the inscription here emphasizes that runes were an everyday script throughout the eleventh century.



Dalby bronze stylus, Skåne:

boui a khrifil – Bove owns the *grefil* (or *grifil*), the graver.

*469

The tiny runes are on both sides of the smooth surface of the stylus. The name boui was first read as bouki [25], but since the side-stroke of the rune read as k was clearly scratched after the last upright stave, it must belong with this and be the obli-

que stroke of an a-rune preceded by an i-rune (thus, | 4 and not ʀ |). The stylus can be dated on runological grounds to the middle ages, Period 3. The spelling boui (with u, not f) can be compared with to(u)æ on the †Listerby rood-loft.

- *471 *Lund wooden cup, Skåne:*
bikkār fār(u)n? – beaker . . .

The runes are cut externally on the base of this big cup, discovered when digging foundations in 1964 [26].

Before we pass on to magical inscriptions, or inscriptions with some taint of magic in them, it is worth considering the purport of the following:

Ikast sword-pommel, North Jutland:
auæ : ma : gracia : btæna : þominu

It is the beginning of Gabriel's greeting to the Blessed Virgin (with the misspelling btæna for plena). The same Hail Mary is written in roman capital letters, abbreviated and misspelt, on the side of the pommel. The date is the end of the thirteenth century.

What is this sacred formula doing here? Is it a charm to ward off evil, like the Ave on the Hæstrup bell? Is it meant to protect the owner from an enemy sword? Is it merely evidence of the owner's piety, as perhaps on the knife-haft from Åstrup? Did both these men know the legend of the tame starling saved from the talons of the hawk when in anguish of death it shrilled out the Ave Maria it had been taught? – But we must not speculate too far, for the owner probably had no clearly defined ideas about it himself.

But if it remains uncertain why Hail Mary was marked on a sword, there is decidedly no doubt about the reason for the next inscription.

- *467 *Ribe steelyard handle, North Jutland:*
in nomine patris æþ filii æþ spiri[tus sancti]
In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost

There was no room for the runes in the square brackets at the end. It is the same custom as we saw in the Primitive Norse fibulae inscriptions and on the bracteates and coins: the artisan is ignorant of runes and writes only as much as there is space for – and then stops short even in the middle of a word.

It is clearly a handle, as the illustration shows – but for what? Mogens Bencard has demonstrated that it must be for a steelyard [27]. Certainly a modern-looking functional handle, reminiscent of the sort we find on our whistling kettles, for instance. But think how confidently you could do your weighing – in the name of the Holy Trinity.

Lund leather scabbards. Three scabbards of leather, for swords, have been found in Lund. The *first scabbard* turned up in 1937. It has a fragmentary and uninterpreted inscription:

??l?(i)?(u)artam?l???koi?? | bari^um^uktu^ugæ^uta^um

The *next sword sheath* came up in a 1979 excavation of what had been a sword-cutler's workshop. The archaeologists date it to the mid-thirteenth century. The three separate inscriptions read:

ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ (ƿ) ƿ
k a r m m a i l u m a i l

No trustworthy interpretation so far offered (cf. J.P. Strid, in Fornv. 1982, pp. 241 ff.).

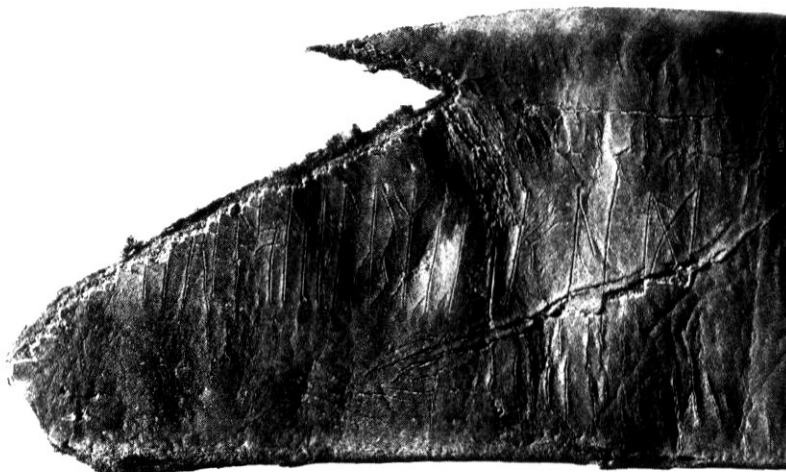
The *third sword sheath* was found on the same site in 1980, archaeologically dated to the beginning of the twelfth century. It is more cryptic and no more intelligible. The system with the “fish” runes is that they should all contain different runes which together make sense. But here all six “fish” contain l-runes, and the side-strokes that have been entered do not make intelligible combinations. When one notices too that the inscriptions on both sides contain marks that have nothing to do with runes, one asks: Has a rune-bungler – like the goldsmiths of the bracteates – promised the owner of the sheath powerful magic – and swindled him?

*476 *477

Professional archaeologists were at work in Slesvig in 1970 and the years following and their excavations have produced numerous inscriptions. The most recent came to light in 1975 and, as in Lund, we may certainly expect more in the future, and Slesvig, Hedeby's successor and heir, will soon be Denmark's second richest runic city. An interesting walking-stick has turned up, just as at Lund, but doubtless the most notable find so far is the little oblong stick with its lewd and derogatory stanza in the Norse metre *ljóðaháttr*. Its frankness is easily surpassed however by the short inscription on one of the seven bone-pieces found in the "culture layer". This teaches us Old Danish terms for parts of the body not normally referred to in polite conversation – though times change.

- 475 Lund leather scabbard 3, side A, Skåne. To be read: ??hrinsnilab???? : li?. – This is an inscription cut by a man who knew a little – too little – about real and secret runes. The inscription is meaningless, as is the case with very many of our magic inscriptions, and the last sign has no connection with the medieval futhork. See the following caption. Photo: Lennart Larsen.

...rinnilab???? : li?





Lund leather scabbard 3, Skåne. 38 cm. Inscribed with secret runes, some “fish” runes, some “twig” runes, 1–2 cm. Photo: Marie Stoklund. 475

Lund leather scabbard 3, side B, Skåne. The impression of the carver’s runic ability conveyed by a study of side A is greatly strengthened by a look at side B. Here the non-runic signs dominate. The fish-like runes can be read aluo or aulo (not olaf as proposed). The carver is a humbug, a charlatan who conned the owner of the scabbard into believing that with his ‘magic’ runes he had made the sword irresistible. Photo: Lennart Larsen. 475



- *479 *Slesvig bone-piece 1* (a rib-bone), 13.4 cm long. Excavated 1972 on the Rathausmarkt site. Archaeological dating: twelfth century [28].

reib

The word may be Old Norse *reip*, rope, possibly here a personal name (cf. the place-name Rebstrup). If the piece is Danish (it could be Norwegian or Swedish), the pronunciation was certainly with monophthong *e*, not *ei*. Diphthongal spelling is part of a conservative *written* tradition. We may compare spellings on runic coins and Bornholm inscriptions that write *stein* alongside *respu* and *eiftr*.

- *479 *Slesvig bone-piece 2* (a rib-bone), c. 10 cm long. Excavated 1972 on the Rathausmarkt site. Archaeological dating: twelfth century. The inscription appears to be complete and begins with

lam

followed by a ligatured rune made up of *k* and *u*, and then a final *u*-rune. Whether the bind-rune is to be read *ku* or *uk* ought to be clear from the context but neither *lamuku* nor *lamkuu* makes a word we can recognise, not even if we assume the initial cluster was originally *hl-*.

- *481 *Slesvig bone-piece 3* (an ossicle), 13.4 cm long. Excavated 1973 on the Rathausmarkt site. Archaeological dating: twelfth century.

fuparsb – fuiþp

The runes are on one side of the bone, with a group at each end, some one way up, some the other. The second group is probably meaningless, while the first, if it is not a botched futhark, is to be divided into *fup ars* (+ *b*), i.e. *cunt* and *arse*, as would still be said in free speech today. (We have little reason to suppose any general use of refined euphemisms, anatomical or sexual, in early Scandinavia.) We have met the word *fup* several times and yet another inscription containing



Slesvig bones 1 and 2, South Jutland. — Nr 1, 13.4 cm, has reib in runes 478
— i.e. “rope”, possibly here a personal name; nr 2, 10 cm, has a legible
but unintelligible inscription.

it has been found in excavations at Cammin [29]. The wooden
phallos found in Danevirke excavations [30] may also remind
us that people let such things run in their minds then as now.

Slesvig bone-piece 4 (a rib-bone), a good 15 cm long. *481
Excavated 1974 in Plessensstrasse. Archaeological dating: see
note 28. This untidy inscription has not been interpreted.

Slesvig bone-piece 5 (a rib-bone), 19 cm long. Excavated *481
1974 in Plessensstrasse. Archaeological dating: twelfth century.

·f·u·p·o·r·i·k·:·h·n·i·i·a·i·s·t·b·m·i·l·i·y



Slesvig bone 7, South Jutland. 10.6 cm. Front and back with a medie- 480
val futhork: fuporkhni followed by two runes upside down on Side A,
astbml(y) on Side B.

This beautifully inscribed sequence reproduces the medieval futhork. The runes a, n and t have side-strokes on one side only, in contrast to those on Slesvig bone-piece 7 – but 7 has the one-sided o-rune, as opposed to ʒ in 5. It might seem as if the inscriber aimed at creating a definite system in his division marks, with the number of dots indicating the number of the rune in its *æt* – but if he did, he did not carry it through.

- *481 *Slesvig bone-piece 6* (a rib-bone), 20.6 cm long. Excavated 1974 in Plessensstrasse. Archaeological dating: see note 28.

A remarkable inscription, apparently as meaningless as that on nr 4. It can be read as follows:

lh·ybk·æhbyeþð

If the detached secondary strokes on the left side of some of the runes have any significance, we may be faced with secret runes of some kind (the inscription might then be a parallel to the Roskilde bronze amulet). The final rune, which is also known from the glass-pane from Give, shows that we are at any rate dealing with a writer who knew his runes, and knew them rather too well for us.

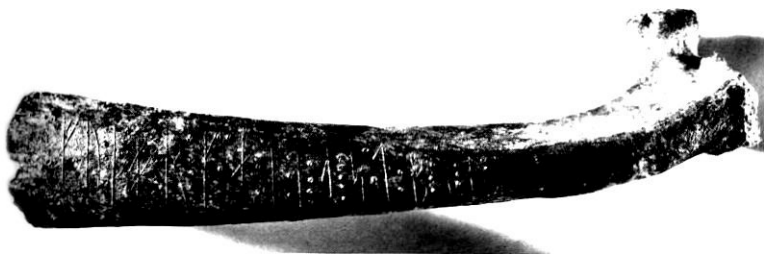
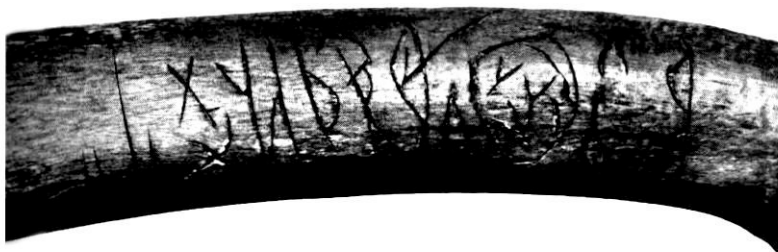
- *479 *Slesvig bone-piece 7* (a rib-bone), 11.6 cm long. Excavated 1975 on the Rathausmarkt site. Archaeological dating: twelfth century.

Side A: fuþorkhni ' kr (upside down)

Side B: astbml(y)

Another example of the medieval futhork (cf. nr 5 above). The alphabet is divided between the two sides in an odd way. On Side A it is cut short after the i-rune by two upside-down runes, probably remnants of an interrupted word. We cannot tell whether the short stroke between these two runes is a division mark or a stut-rune s, '. If it is the latter, the writer used two different s-forms, in the same way as Sven Harper did on his stick – to which we now turn.

- *483 *Slesvig walking-stick*, length now c. 65 cm, thickness c. 3



Counting from the top: Slesvig bones 3, 4, 5 and 6, South Jutland. Nr 3. 478ff.
 The inscription offers a pair of good old words for parts of the body
 not normally referred to in polite conversation. Nr 5 has a very nicely
 engraved medieval futhork, nr 4 is a confused scrawl, nr 6 has not so
 far been interpreted.

cm. Found in four pieces in 1975 on the Rathausmarkt site. Archaeological dating: see note 28.

The stick, whose bottom end shows it had hit the ground often and hard, was probably made from a branch stripped of its bark and lightly shaped to suit its purpose. It is a good deal stouter than the finely-worked Lund example. The cross-section reminds one most of a parallelogram with rounded corners. It has four inscriptions, two of them meaningless and one erroneous — it looks like a practice piece, but in the fourth the carver finally manages to express himself clearly and correctly.

Inscription 1 (c. 5.5 cm from the bottom):

× krist : haba suia † harbara †

Christ help Sven (the) harper

Inscription 2 (on the opposite side, 5 cm from the bottom):

kiirnmirih(?)l

Inscription 3 (approximately on the same face as nr 1, 28 cm from the bottom):

ūⁿ(k)ipkhmk(?)t) . . .

Inscription 4 (on the same face as nr 3, towards the top, divided between two of the fragments):

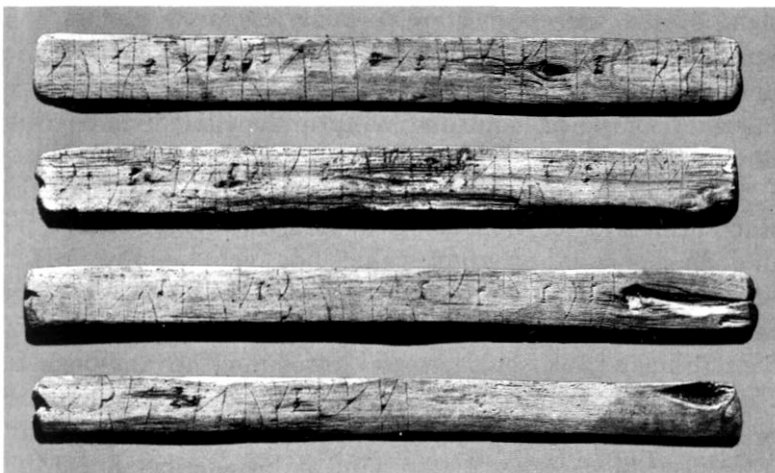
kris[t] × hialb × suein × harbara

Christ help Sven (the) harper

Sven spells his name with diphtong ei in nr 4 but nr 1 has suia, a mistake for suin. We must certainly take the ei spelling in the same way as in reib on bone-piece 1 — a piece of conservative orthography which in reality does not represent the true pronunciation.

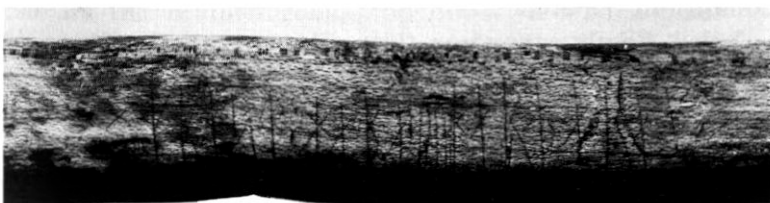
We note that in nr 1 and nr 4 the writer uses both the ordinary s-rune, ʁ, and the stut-rune s, †. If the latter signifies that the stut-runes were still in living use in Slesvig when the stick was inscribed, the dating would have to be shifted back to the beginning of the twelfth century, if not the end of the eleventh.

The cognomen “harper” may not mean that Sven was a practising musician — it could be an inherited name (though it doubtless means one of his forebears was a minstrel). But the



Slesvig rune stick, South Jutland. 15 cm. — Discovered in the Rathausmarkt dig in 1973. Dated on archaeological grounds to the twelfth century. Who had ever dreamt that in that century in Slesvig people strung jocular insults together in the verse-form called *ljóðaháttir*? The author does not find this lighthearted and coarse stanza difficult to understand, but he is less sure that every more serious philologist will give him total support. He finds the intention paralleled in a well-known saying in Jutland: Poor people do have a limit — but not until the first mouthful is coming out the other end!

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Slesvig walking-stick, South Jutland. About 3 cm thick. — Two of the four inscriptions, nr 1 below, nr 4 above, both saying the same thing: Christ help Sven (the) Harper.

480

sight of the well-worn stick certainly evokes a picture of a wandering player touring the town and its neighbourhood. Did he tackle his runes when he had seen the bottom of more than one bowl of ale or had stumbled from the straight and narrow in some other way?

*483 *Slesvig rune stick*, c. 15 cm long. Excavated 1973 on the Rathausmarkt site. Archaeological dating: twelfth century.

Side A: runar | iak | risti | a | r(i)kiata | tre sua

Side B: reþ | sar | riki | mogr | asir | a | artakum

Side C: hular | auk | bular | meli | þer

Side D: ars | sum | magi

The inscription makes a stanza of almost perfect ljóðahátt, a Norse metre hardly known outside Norway and Iceland. It can be transcribed in a normalised early medieval Danish as follows:

runar iak risti

a r(i)kjanda træ

swa reþ sar riki mogr

æsir a ardagum

hullar ok bullar

mæli þær ars sum magi [31]

Runes I wrote

on the driving (?) tree,

so propounded the powerful one:

æsir in early days,

“hurlys” and “burlys”,

may they say for you bum is like

belly.

The last line seems to be a coarse reflection on someone's greedy eating. It reminds one of a saying in Jutland: Poor people do have a limit — but not until the first mouthful is coming out the other end.

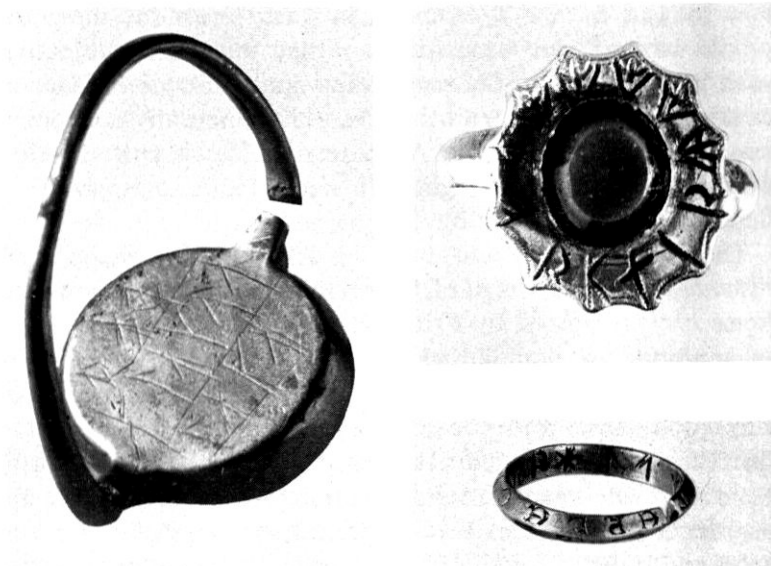
I shall briefly expand on this — it is a personal offering and there is no doubt that many other explanations will come. I imagine a group of young men sitting and drinking at an inn. They make vulgar jokes at each other's expense but not with any bad feeling. A poet among them makes a mocking stanza about one of the party who evidently had a reputation for gluttony. He was not an outstanding poet by any means — stuck for words he made up his own, as apparently in *hular auk bular*. These may formally be nouns, perhaps in apposi-

tion to *asir* in line 4 or perhaps slang terms for things or people beyond our ken; together they make the subject of *mæli* in the last line. Formally, they could also be the second or third person singular of o-verbs – but then any connected sense is hard to come by. A distressing fact is that the first word in line 5 ought to begin with a vowel, not an aspirate, for the sake of alliteration [32].

The words *hular* and *bular* must be home-made, and *rikjanda* (*rekjanda*?) is hard to interpret. Might it be from Old Norse *hrekja*, glossed by Fritzner: “to drive someone away in an annoying or humiliating manner” – or is it a different word altogether?. None of the possible readings makes particularly good sense, and one may well be tempted to conclude that the versifier needed a three-syllable word alliterating in *r* and took what came into his head. Altogether it seems to me unprofitable to ponder too deeply either on this word or on *hular* and *bular*.

Three people appear to be involved: (1) “I”, the writer or poet; (2) someone who is (ironically or jokingly) referred to as “the mighty son” or “powerful one”, and who either “propounded” or “read” the runes; and (3) the poor chap who is addressed so rudely.

Linguistic points to note are: *risti* is the preterite of the weak verb *rista*, and the first person ending has become *-i* (on the analogy of the third), in contrast for example to *iak satta* on the Gørlev stone. The word *mogr* – with *o* – must be Primitive Norse *magur*, Norse *mogr*, well known in poetry from Norway and Iceland, meaning son, (young) man. The *æsir* are the heathen gods, who doubtless find a place because of the ancient metre the poet has embarked on. The phrase *a ardagum*, in days of yore, corresponds to the tag *i árdaga* in West Norse verse (it is combined with the word *áss* (*æsir*) twice in eddaic poetry); and the whole line is on the same mock-pompous level as *sar riki mogr*. I take *mæli* to be the third person plural subjunctive of *mæla*, to speak, declare. Here it is to be translated, “may they declare” or “let them announce”, and what is to be declared or announced follows: *þær* (dative of singular *þu*, you) – for you your arse



- 102 487 Three gold rings with runes. 1. *Revninge*, Fyn. Includes the mighty talisman *agla*, twice repeated in variant order: *agla, gala, laga* (Thou art strong to eternity, Lord). Persian signs are scratched on the plate where the cornelian is fixed. 2. "*Absalon's ring*" has nothing to do with Archbishop Absalon. Its inscription is the man's name þorkæir followed by five y-runes (cf. the Skabersjö brooch). 3. *Gørding*, North Jutland. With an incomprehensible runic inscription and an almost equally incomprehensible majuscule inscription, probably a distortion of a Magi formula.

190 300 is as your stomach — that is, belly and gut are both in the same state, both full to bursting. — One thing we can conclude from the conjunction *sum* is that it was hardly a Norwegian who inscribed the stick. We have met the word as an adverb and in the form *sæm* on the Rimsø and Sædinge stones.

What is the age of this jovially coarse inscription? Like the Bornholm inscriptions, it uses the o-rune and consequently has a (not a) in preposition a and in *asir*. On the other hand, there is not a single medieval rune form anywhere and the r-rune is correctly used. So c. 1075 ± 25 years.

MAGIC INSCRIPTIONS. WORDS OF POWER

Many of the inscriptions of magical import are more-or-less unintelligible – many in fact are pure gibberish, cut by a “wise one” who in his runic ignorance nevertheless still understood quite well that such an “inscription” was undoubtedly as effective against sickness as any “correct” one would be – as long as the patient had confidence in it. Folklorists are familiar with the runic formula which the “wise” man or woman was supposed to write in the patient’s blood on his forehead (to stop bleeding): continuance follows! Greenland is an especially prolific source of such corrupt sequences. We may on the other hand also note that quite a few inscriptions show that modern commentators may sometimes contrive to make such messages a good deal more complicated than they actually are. A small example may be taken from the numerous amulet inscriptions of Sweden:

Vassunda plate, Sweden:

ba(l)(p)rkustatiaptpiaskri | stu

It has been suggested that this should be read: balpr ku stati a ptp ias kriistu and translated: Lord God, place (my cause) on the death of Jesus Christ. – A simpler reading which recognises some well-known Latin words in the text makes sense of at least part of this “distortion”:

pater kustodiat . . . Kristus | (God the) Father guard . . . Christ

The Primitive Norse period had its bracteate amulets, the middle ages had their

Amulet finger-rings. The *Revninge ring*, with the mighty talisman agla, twice repeated, inscribed on it, was discussed above. (Agla, we remember, stands for Thou art strong to eternity, Lord.) Two others exist. One of them is called *Absalon’s ring* – it is thirteenth-century and has nothing to do with the great archbishop, but the name has become traditional. It is inscribed with the name Thorger (spelt þorkærir, with roman K) followed by five y-runes (ʁ). Are they magical

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*486

354 runes or do they mean something else? Cf. the Skabersjö buckle from Skåne.

*486 The other runic ring comes from *Gørding* in North Jutland
474 and, like the Ikast sword-pommel, is inscribed both with runes and with roman capital letters.

The runes read: *lomrikmitlrþ

The majuscules: +GVTTATERLEGMT | +VGTTTTGTTG

The Latin formula is well known on other rings and in charms against sickness; it is doubtless a corruption of a formula referring to the Magi. As for the runes, perhaps the inscriber himself had no more idea what they mean than we have.

In the middle ages (and later) stone-age axes were regarded as “thunder stones”, which would ward off lightning. We may be justified in thinking that if such an axe also had runes on it, its effectiveness was doubled – at least.

*490 *Vejle stone-age axe*, North Jutland:
lyfætyio +

No interpretation; but the first three words put us in mind of
493 the Ribe healing stick. The word *lyf* means cure, healing.

Vedslet amulet stone, North Jutland:
þmkrhli | iklmrþh | A?hþa

No interpretation; but we may recall the þmk-formula on Gørlev stone 1, and note that the two groups contain the same runes but in different sequence.

Two runic amulets have come to light in Roskilde, one of bronze and the other of wood, both made to be worn on the person.

*489 *Roskilde bronze amulet*, Sjælland:
Contains the name siuæarþ (modern Danish Sivert) and secret runes.



Roskilde bronze amulet, Sjælland. 9 cm long. — Side A has the name Siuæarp, Side B luf(r)? The rest consists of cryptic runes, not at present understood.



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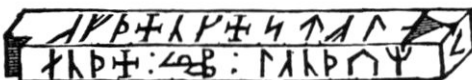
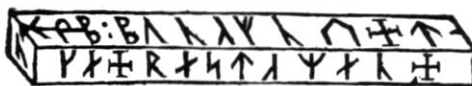
The Roskilde upu stick, Sjælland. Pine. 12.3 cm long. — With a hole to take a thong and inscribed on all four sides with a constant repetition of the runes up in varying order and placing. A quack's amulet? A charm against sickness?

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†Virgula erotica, “love-stick”, Viborg, North Jutland. 5.5 cm long. — It was given its name by Ole Worm who himself drew the original for the pewter plate engraving here reproduced. How the inscription really appeared can be seen from the rubbing (in the British Museum). Worm read the runes as a sort of love-letter, but it is more probably a mountebank's “cure” or amulet passed off on some credulous man or woman, with an inscription that is a mixture of runes, crosses and scrawls.



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Vejle stone-age axe,
North Jutland. 16.5 cm
long. — The runes and
cross are medieval.



Æbelholt love-amulet,
Sjælland. 7.3 × 4.8 cm.
— On the one side
(upper picture) it con-
tains the word *amorem*
(Latin accusative, love)
and on the other (lower
picture), also in Latin,
the words: I drive you
(plural) with gold. The
rest is gibberish.

*489 *Roskilde upu stick*, Sjælland:

Covered with the letters up from end to end, forwards and backwards, and on all four sides.

- *489 From *Viborg* in North Jutland comes a stick which since Ole Worm's time has been known as *Virgula erotica* or "love-stick". Worm succeeded in finding a runic inscription of some length in it but in reality it is only a miscellaneous collection of runes and scrawls [34].

Æbelholt "amulets", Sjælland. Æbelholt monastery had a famous and much visited hospital in the middle ages. A broken lead amulet has been found there with many runes on it, though they make no linguistic sense, no more than a newly found (broken) lead amulet from Ottestrup, Fyn.

Æbelholt bone amulet is more interesting:

amōræmm : e(l) ...phækko | staar (or stara) | t.. | āgo auro :
uos : ...l : sanrōrōn · gasdaer āng ...



Ottestrup lead tablet, Fyn. The biggest of the fragments, with meaningless inscriptions on both sides. Photo: Lennart Larsen.

Among this “Latin” we can make out *amorem* (love, accusative), perhaps *hæc* (this, feminine), and *ago auro vos* (I drive you – plural – with gold); ang . . . could be the beginning of *angelus* (angel)? Did not Pope Boniface complain that members of the lower clergy prepared love-potions and told fortunes and used the most sacred of ecclesiastical things – even the Host itself – to magnify the potency of their wizardry?

Ottestrup lead tablet, Fyn. In 1981–83 four fragments of a small sheet of lead came to light one after the other in Ottestrup. The runes on them are scratched quite deep, but, as far as we can tell, they are meaningless – a conclusion which the accompanying illustration of the biggest of the three pieces will confirm. Each side has the remains of four lines on it:

Side A: ma?...| ...us × luki...|...nis × unt...|...?tuus?...

Side B: ...?k·b?...|utusy?...|...(k)ipukntu...|...(k)uru??...

A corresponding amulet, pierced for wearing, was found with a coin of King Sven Grathe's (1146–57) in 1982 in the ruins of the medieval castle at Søborg. The perpetrator was an even

worse humbug than the Ottestrup scoundrel. The *Søborg lead tablet* was also inscribed on both sides with runes and rune-like marks. 7.2 × 1.1 × 0.3 cm.

We have slowly approached examples of magic in its most highly concentrated form. The following inscription must have left the ears of even the strongest disease-demon tingling and ringing – but even so, this is no more than everyday “monk magic”. After it, as a veritable climax of exorcistic white magic, we come to a classically constructed sickness-ridding incantation drawn from the highest spheres of esoteric learning.

*493 *Odense lead tablet, Fyn:*

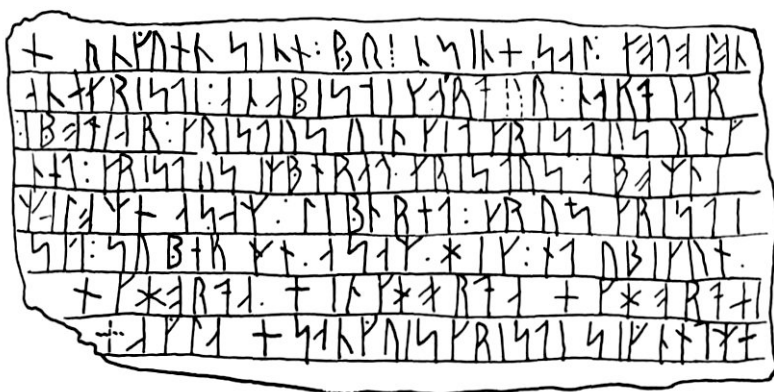
+(u)nguensine : pr(i)nsin(e)sal : kotolon | anakristi : anapisti-
(k)ard??r : nardiar | : ipodiar : kristus uinkit kristus reg | net :
kristus imperat · kristus ab omni | malo me asam : liperet :
krux kristi | sit : super me · asam · hik et ubikue · | + khorda ·
+ inkhorda + khordai | + agla + sanguis kristi signet me +
To be translated (regnet an error for regnat):

+ (u)nguensine pr(i)nsin(e) sal kotolon anakristi anapisti
(k)ard(ia)r nardiar ipodiar. Christ conquers, Christ reigns,
Christ commands, Christ deliver me, Åse, from all evil, the
cross of Christ be over me, Åse, here and everywhere. + khorda
+ inkhorda + khordai + agla (Thou art strong to eternity,
Lord) + the blood of Christ bless me +

The sheet of lead was found in St Knud’s churchyard, rolled up in three tight layers. We may reasonably assume therefore that it had been stuck into a coffin to procure relief for the patient, Åse, whose sickness would be transferred to the corpse. Among the many incantatory words we can first see something to do with anointing and then something to do with “prime-signing” (the pre-baptism ceremony). Between the second and third cross-mark from the end we observe the

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powerful agla, which we have met on the Revninge finger-ring and elsewhere. – There are numerous spelling mistakes in the inscription, but that calls for no comment when one thinks first of the complexity of the charm and then of the size of the piece of lead. There are almost always errors in these long amulet inscriptions, cf. e.g. the well-known lead amulet from



Odense lead tablet, Fyn. 7.2 × 3.5 cm. — A long, confused incantation to regain health and to free “me, Åse, from all evil”. The lead sheet was rolled up and stuck into a coffin so that the malady could be transferred to the corpse and be buried for good. The formula is a mixture of words half or wholly meaningless (*anakristi*, *anapisti*, *kardiar*, etc.) and devout statements (Christ conquers, Christ reigns, etc.); it also contains the powerful *agla* (see the caption to the Revninge ring above).

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Alvastra in Sweden, with a long “seven sleepers” formula on it, which was also found in a coffin — it had been inscribed for a woman called *Benedicta*. — As for the charm itself, it belongs to a type not uncommon in Denmark. Cf. *Blæsinge* lead tablet.

Danish runes — the living runes of Denmark — could certainly not have a finer swan-song than the following:

Ribe healing stick, North Jutland:

iorþ : biþak : uarþæ : ok : uphimæn : sol : ok : santæmaria :
 ok : salfæn : gudrotæn : þæt han : læ mik : læknæs : hand : ok
 lif : tuggæ : atliuæ || uiuindnæ : þær : botæ : þarf : or : bak :
 ok or bryst : or lækæ : ok or lim : or ouæn : ok or øræn : or :
 allæ þe : þær : ilt : kaniat || kumæ : suart : hetær : sten : hæn :
 stær : i hafæ : utæ : þær : ligær : a : þe : ni : nouþær : þæ<r :
 l??r (a) : (þ)en?nþæpeskulhuærki> || skulæ : huærki : sötæn :
 sofæ : æþ : uarmnæn : uakæ : fœrræn : þu : þæssæ : bot :
 biþær : þær : akorþ : at kæþæ : ronti : amæn : ok || þæt : se +

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In *tuggæ gg* stands for *ng*. — *uiuindnæ* is a mistake for *biuindæ*. — *lækæ* should be *likæ*. — *kaniat* may be an error for *kan* : at [35]. — *uarmnæn* is erroneous for *uarmæn*, *kæpæ* for *kuæpæ*. — The runes in angle brackets were partly cut away by the carver himself — there were too many mistakes in them.

<i>Jorþ biþ ak uarþæ</i>	Earth I pray guard
<i>ok uphimæn</i>	and the heaven above,
<i>sol ok santæ Maria</i>	sun and Saint Mary
<i>ok sialfæn Gudrotæn</i>	and himself the Lord God,
<i>þæt han læ mik læknæs hand</i>	that he grant me hands to make whole
<i>ok lif tungæ</i>	and healing tongue
<i>at liuæ biuindæ</i>	to cure the Trembler
<i>þær botæ þarf</i>	when treatment is needed.

From back and from breast, from trunk and from limb, from eyes and from ears; from every place where evil can enter. — A stone is called *swart*; it stands out in the sea. On it lie nine Needs. They shall neither sleep sweet nor wake warm [i.e. they must unceasingly torment the sickness-demon] until you [the patient] are better of it; for whom I have caused runes to utter words [i.e. for whom I have used runes to write the exorcism to be spoken over the patient]. Amen. And so be it. (Followed by the sign of the cross.)

- 493 Ribe healing stick. North Jutland. Pine. Just under 30 cm, with Denmark's nextlongest runic inscription. — It contains a spell designed to exorcise the Trembler — malaria, which was a scourge in Denmark in the middle ages — in round terms we can say the inscription was made about 1300. — The incantation is directed against the disease-demon and is built up in five parts: 1. The supreme powers are invoked. 2. The exorcism to cast out the demon. 3. A brief, passive narrative stage. 4. Active threat. 5. Amen, the Hebrew word, which is then translated into Danish: *þæt se* — so be it! This is the word that sets the whole process in motion, in the same way doubtless as *gagaga* on the Kragehul spear-shaft in 103 the Primitive Norse period and *aallatti* on the Lund weaving-tablet in 358 the Viking Age.

[illegible]

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It will be noticed that this casting-out formula is built up with strict logic in five independent parts. First the healer fills himself with divine strength by invoking the whole universe (is that perhaps a pagan heritage?) and the highest powers. Next comes the exorcism, driving out the demon responsible for the sickness (from back and from breast and so on). The third part can be looked on as a narrative designed to strike terror into the demon, followed by the active threatening statement (they shall neither sleep sweet etc.). Finally, the whole incantation is sealed by the Hebrew Amen, which for safety's sake is also translated – So be it – so that the demon may make no mistake about it and not persuade himself he can linger in the patient for a moment longer. This *amen* thus corresponds exactly to the *aallatti* on the Lund weaving-tablet and *gagaga* on the Kragehul spear-shaft.

In the middle ages – and we may note at once that the language of the Ribe stick shows it was written about 1300 – medicine was built on the ancient Greek and Roman authorities (Hippocrates, c.460–475 BC, and Galen of the second century of our era – the twin pillars of the Salernian school), who prescribed “cold” remedies for “hot” diseases, “wet” remedies for “dry” diseases, and so on (theories that have a good deal more to be said in their favour than may appear from this crude reduction). But every class of society – not least the clerics – held fast to magical means of healing – partly remedies of the kind that should be fetched from the graveyard at the full of the moon and such like, and partly treatments whose influence was exerted through charms like those we have now met in several examples. Among such remedies the “strong” language of the Ribe stick was doubtless counted one of the most potent.

The trembling sickness is malaria which was by no means unknown in Denmark and elsewhere in North Europe in the middle ages, sometimes in fatal strains. Oliver Cromwell died of the shivering sickness, we may remember, and the malaria mosquito bred on Lolland as late as about 1800 – indeed, malaria was once called the Lolland infection.

The inscription has many linguistic peculiarities. That it belongs to Jutland and more specifically to Ribe is indicated

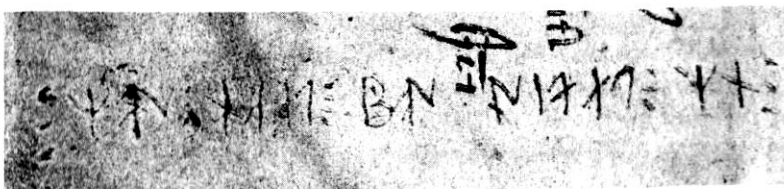
by the forms *a(k)*, *øwæn* and *stær*, and the reduced final vowels also correspond to Jutish dialectal development (*uarþæ*, older *uarþa*, *himæn*, older *himin*). Actually, the last word cited, *himæn*, is not a Danish form (they say *himmel*, with final *l*), and if we look at the inscription again, we find a good many forms that represent the language of our close cousins, the Norwegians – *læknes hand* is one of them. We must conclude either that a Norwegian in Ribe inscribed a Danish charm or that a Dane in the same place copied a Norwegian one, with the writer's native speech making itself felt in either case. In fact, we need have small hesitation in deciding that the writer was a Jutlander: he had the charm (which had international currency) in a Norwegian version and he kept those Norwegian forms which, while they posed no problems of understanding, contrived to give the language an antique and ceremonial stamp [36].

But that being so, we in Denmark cannot boast of having a verse-maker in or near the year 1300 who was capable of composing in the ancient metre called *fornyrðislag*. The charmer from Ribe took the typical eight-line stanza from a Norwegian exemplar.

It is instructive to compare the Ribe spell, which we also know in more or less closely related forms in German and English, with the Canterbury charm with which we ended our discussion of Period 2, the Viking Age. There the instigator of the sickness is identified by name and once the healer knows that name, he has control over the demon and it must obey his command to leave the patient: Flee now – you are discovered! In the Ribe charm there is no direct reference to the disease-demon, but the sickness itself is named. Since the disease and the demon are identical, the net result is the same: to treat the sickness one must cast out the devil.

It ill befits a Christian, or a Christian prayer, to invoke the power of earth and sun, but our charm has this by way of introduction. Is it an ancient pre-Christian spell in which St Mary and the Lord God have ousted Thor and Odin? Does it mean that we are not drawing to a close round about 1300 but are carried back once more to the Viking Age – back to the period before Harald Blacktooth “the good” set up his great

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Lund annals in Erfurt (Cod. Erfordensis nr 23, 8vo; cf. ÅrbOldkynd. 1936, p. 248). The runes say: mons : hoat : pos sidæt : me : – Mogens Hvat owns me – written on the last page of the annals at some time in the fifteenth century.

Jelling stone? Or even farther back – do the words here echo an irresistible incantation that rumbled through the Germanic world two thousand years ago?

NOTES

- 1 Cf. Jens Vellev, Hammer og tang, Skalk, 1975, nr. 4, pp. 25ff.
- 1a Ebbe Nyborg, FestskrLangberg, 1972, p. 54, text fig. 8. – Jens Vellev, MIV 11, 1981, p. 70.
- 2 It appears that when the west end of *Fjenneslev church* was restored about the middle of the nineteenth century, a limestone ashlar was removed and ended up on a farm in the parish. It has this inscription copied from the rune stone, but with a “round” u-rune: + sasur : ris(p). It was rediscovered in 1981 and is now in Sorø museum. Cf. Nationalmuseets arbejdsmark 1982, “Falske runeindskrifter”, fig. 3.
- 3 Cf. hikuin 1, 1974, pp. 81 ff., and e.g. fig. 3.
- 4 Sylling, NoIyR II, p. 128.
- 4a E. Salvén, Vår bygd, 1938, pp. 71f. (reconstruction).
- 5 Francis Beckett, Danmarks Kunst I, pp. 95f.
- 5a Nationalmuseets arbejdsmark 1977, p. 132.
- 6 Sveriges kyrkor. Skåne. Part 139, fig. 95. Sven B.F. Jansson kindly send me a photograph and some commentary.
- 7 Erik Cinthio of Lunds Historiska Museum has made photographs available.
- 8 E. Moltke, ÅrbOldk. 1953, pp. 151 ff. – Danmarks Kirker. Sønderjylland, Tønder amt (Rabsted), 1956, p. 1589.
- 9 Die Kunstdenkmäler des Landes Schleswig-Holstein. Landkreis Flensburg, 1952, p. 197.
- 10 Jens Vellev, Fynske Minder 1975: Altre og Alter-indvielser.
- 11 Örtöfta, Lilla Harrie, Söder Viddinge, Västra Sallerup, Hör.

- 12 Niels-Knud Liebgott gives an easily accessible introduction to "prime-staves" and calendar runes in *Kalendere. Folkelig tidsregning i Norden*, published by the National Museum, Copenhagen, 1973.
- 13 T.E. Christiansen, *Fra Ribe amt* 1976, pp. 135ff. — Harald Langberg, *Gunhild's Cross and Medieval Court Art in Denmark*, Copenhagen 1982. Contrary to the text on the cross Langberg believes that the inscriptions are additions.
- 14 Kult. Mus. 49326: 109a. Cf. Anders W. Mårtensson, *Kulturen* 1961, p. 17 [mid-twelfth century]. A rib-bone with a corresponding alphabet (only from k to r) was found in Novgorod in 1958, cf. E.A. Makaev, *Sovjetskaja archeologija* 3, Moscow 1962, pp. 309 ff. [c. 1000–1200].
- 15 Kult. Mus. 53436: 521. Cf. R. Blomqvist, Anders W. Mårtensson, *Thulegrävningen* 1961, 1963, p. 209, fig. 237 [rib-bone, apparently from a cow; magic].
- 16 Kult. Mus. 66166: 370. Rib-bone, 24.1 cm long, maximum width 2.1 cm.
- 17 Kult. Mus. 42904, found when cable-trenching. Cf. Anders W. Mårtensson, *Kulturen* 1961, p. 19.
- 18 Kult. Mus. 61277: 331. Cf. Sven B.F. Jansson, *Kulturen* 1970, p. 111.
- 19 Kult. Mus. 44606: 28.
- 20 Kult. Mus. 62892: 2459.
- 21 Kult. Mus. 66118. Only 6 cm long and 0.4–0.5 cm broad.
- 22 Mogens Bencard has pointed out that the object is mistakenly identified as a comb in *DaRun* — it is a comb-case.
- 23 Kult. Mus. 53436: 8. See the work referred to in note 15, pp. 57, 174, fig. 41.
- 24 Kult. Mus. Cf. Anders W. Mårtensson, *Res mediaevales (Festskrift till Ragn-Blomqvist)*, 1968, pp. 217 ff., figs. 2–6. Lennart Karlsson, *Romansk träornamentik i Sverige*, 1976, pp. *176, 43, 58f., 118.
- 25 Lunds Historiska Museum. Cf. Anders W. Mårtensson, *Styli och vaxtavlor*, *Kulturen* 1961, pp. 127 f. Deciphered and interpreted by Evert Salberger.
- 26 Kult. Mus. 57135: 1240.
- 27 E. Moltke, *Nationalmuseets arbejdsmark* 1960, pp. 135 f. — Mogens Bencard, *Mark og mønter* 1972, pp. 38 ff.
- 28 Volker Vogel of the Landesmuseum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Schleswig, told me in a letter of 15.7.75 that the finds on the Rathausmarkt site can mostly be dated to the twelfth century, as can items 5 and 6 from Plessensstrasse. Nr 4 and the walking-stick could "unter Umständen noch der zweiten Hälfte des 11. Jahrhunderts angehören".
- 29 Cf. Jan Żak — Evert Salberger, *Ein Runenfund von Kamień Pomorski [earlier Cammin] in Westpommern*, *Meddel. från Lunds Univ.*

- Hist. Mus. 1962-63, 1963, pp. 324 ff. [a rib-bone with fup on one side and kur on the other; dated 1000-1050 on archaeological grounds]. Cf. also the Skellerup plaster inscription.
- 30 Skalk 1973, nr 6, p. 10.
 - 31 Aage Lauritsen has kindly pointed out to me some lines cited by Peter Hirschfeld, *Herrenhäuser . . . in Schleswig-Holstein*, 1964, p. 192, which have a similar onomatopœic word-play, though here with "real" words: Herr Caspar von Sallern / kan bullern und ballern / und wer doch en goden Mann. English "hurly-burly" might be mentioned — used as substantive, adjective and adverb — and thought to come from an earlier, but unattested, "hurling and burling" — *Macbeth* is the first instance noted in my dictionary, but there may be better sources (translator's addition). Niels Åge Nielsen (50 danske runeindskrifter, 1981, p. 83) suggests these are onomatopœic words for belly rumbles and farting.
 - 32 I am grateful to Professor Jón Helgason for a profitable exchange of letters on the subject of this inscription. He would prefer to take hulaR and bulaR (which he also regards as nonce-words) as verbs.
 - 33 Anders Bæksted in *Danske Studier*, 1939, p. 136.
 - 34 Cf. Erik Moltke, *Jon Skonvig og de andre runetegnere*, 1958, II, pp. 122f.
 - 35 As Aslak Liestøl suggests, kaniat kumæ can also be read: kan i at kumæ, knows how to come in.
 - 36 E. Moltke, *Runepindene fra Ribe*, Nationalmuseets arbejdsmark 1960, pp. 2 ff. — L.L. Hammerich, *Der Zauberstab aus Ripen*, *Festskr. Fr. v. der Leyen*, pp. 147 ff.

"OUR YOUNGEST RUNIC INSCRIPTIONS"

This title comes from an excellent and entertaining essay by Anders Bæksted in *Danske Studier* 1939, and what follows is no more than a résumé of what he says so well.

The last "proper" inscriptions are the dated or datable recordings on the Stokkemarke reliquary of Bishop Gisike and the Lösen tombstone with 1310 (or 1311) on it. Some carpenters' runes may be from the same period, and the Ribe stick is also from about or towards 1300. After that runes disappear in Denmark — or rather, they go underground. They certainly continued to lead a secret life — some people must have cared for them, nurtured them. How else could a foreigner be in a position to cut runes in stone soon after 1500?

There are two runic inscriptions in Lund cathedral from just that time – in Low German [1]. They owe their existence to Adam van Düren from Westphalia – architect, sculptor, pessimist (and what besides?). He was called to work in Denmark and Sweden at the end of the fifteenth century. One of his tasks was supervision of the restoration of the cathedral in Lund, a work which lasted, with a single interruption, from c. 1510 to the end of the 1520s.

On the plinth of the buttress pillar which originally stood west of the south door but is now in the crypt we find written in runes and roman capitals and minuscules:

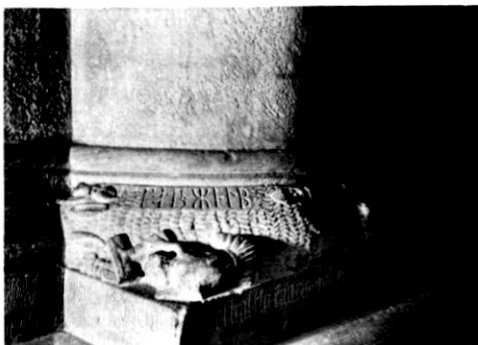
kot · help ADAMS börn – God help Adam's children

Then in roman majuscules a Low German inscription which says in translation: The beginning is easy enough, but the end must carry the load.

The other runic inscription is on the westernmost half-pillar in the north aisle. On the north side of the pillar there is a carving of a donkey which has collapsed under its burden. On the back of the donkey is pictured a cloth with a Danish text in small letters: thet maa vell en asen väre som tagher mer paa änd han kand bäre 1527 – the name of ass he well may wear, who takes up more than he can bear, 1527. In the opposite corner we see a man scraping the donkey's flayed hide and here in runes it says:

got · help

Lund cathedral, Skåne.
C. 1500. One of Adam
van Düren's sculptures
with a runic inscription
in Low German: got help
– God help (us)!



and then in roman capitals around the plinth another couplet:
That we our frailty but feebly comprehend will lead, O Lord
our God, to what an end? – Adam did not have an easy time,
coping with himself or with anybody else.

In the sixteenth century various men and women of the nobility wrote out runic alphabets and made runic notes. But it was *the Odder dug-out canoe*, a boat made of a hollowed-out oak trunk, that put Bæksted on the track of Olaus Magnus. For the runes on this dug-out, scarred and worn like the rest of the timber:

† ʁ † : ʁ ʁ ʁ † :

asa fruda or æsæ frudæ

proved to correspond exactly to those of the “alphabetum gothicum” which the Swedish historians, Johannes Magnus and his brother, Olaus, published in the middle of the sixteenth century and thus made them known to all Europe – and to Ole Worm as well. The boat is old but because ʁ is used for r in the middle of a word, the runes cannot have been cut until after 1550. Was it some fantastic antiquarian lordling who gave the boat its runic name and called it “joy of the *æsir*”? Or was he a joker, a leg-puller?

A *towel-horse* from 1605 in the National Folk Museum is rune-inscribed:

doel abrahamsdaater

Doel Abraham's daughter.

The Scanian *Skönebäck horn* has a very long inscription which, to translate the description of an early Swedish scholar, consists of “an evening, love and drinking song in a seemly, chivalrous and elevated tone”.

Otherwise we find runes on “sacrificial knives”, gravestones, silver cups, and so on. Bæksted gives many amusing examples. Let us end this little section with the following substantial inscription, noting beforehand that, at the end of the nineteenth century, Alexander Foss's foundry in Fredericia issued a great many wares with runic inscriptions on them. One of

their products was a “bronze-age” dagger — of cast iron — examples of which are regularly brought in to the National Museum every second year or so by people who think they have struck gold in some antique shop or junk market [2].

The inscription in *Vibæk mill*, Als, South Jutland:

* 1 1 1 . ʏ ʌ ʀ ʀ ʀ . 1 ʏ . ʙ ʔ ʙ ʀ ʙ ʔ ʀ ʏ . * 1 ʀ . ʙ ʌ ʏ ʔ 1 .
 ʔ ʔ ʔ . ʏ ʌ ʀ

hans · myller · af · beberberg · har · byget pen myl
 Hans Møller of Peberberg has built this mill

and then in large roman capitals:

FOR IØRGEN KRACK A KIESTINA MARI IØRGENS AO 1756

For Jørgen Krack and Kirstina Mary Jørgens AD 1756

Christiansø copper plate. Another inscription is only five years younger, from 1761, cut on a sheet of copper with a striping tool. A tourist found it among the rocks in 1977. The initials under the inscription show it was cut by Herman Bohn Wolfesen, who came to the island in 1734 and finally became commandant of the fortress in 1779. Traces of mortar on the reverse of the plate show that it was originally set in the wall of a building. The inscription is in homage of King Christian V who in 1684 ordered the fortification of this little rocky island, just a few miles from Bornholm and Denmark’s easternmost outpost. The runes imitate Viking Age forms, though the a- and n-runes sometimes have a cross-stroke, sometimes a stroke on one side only. ʔ is used for e, dotted u for v, short s for c; the d-rune is a local invention, an l-rune with a little cross-stroke in the middle on the left. In the language of Bornholm and in English it reads:

vor konge rigers far
 han moille giuet har
 paa kristiani oie 1761
 et sted i oister soie
 ved femte christian
 for kongen trede man

The father of our kingdoms
 has given much
 on Christiansø 1761
 a place in the Baltic Sea.
 By Christian the Fifth
 — let men approach the king —

bleu fordom fisker moie
til en befestet oie 1684
aarsaker at den haun
skal uaere soiemans gaun
at redde skib og gods
med folkene derhos
anno 1761 den 2 IUNI

the once toilsome place for fishermen
became a fortified island 1684
Causes that this harbour
shall be a benefit to the seaman,
to save ship and cargo
and people too.
In the year 1761, the 2nd of June.

HW

NOTES

- 1 The marks cut in a capital in the crypt of the cathedral in Lund which have been interpreted as runes (instituit Nicolaus) in *Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällposten* (7.4.73) are not runes at all.
- 2 Erik Moltke, "Falske" runeindskrifter, *Nationalmuseets arbejdsmark* 1982, pp. 8, 10.

RUNIC STUDIES IN DENMARK

DaRun of 1942 contains a bibliography by Anders Bæksted of all the authors who up to then had made contribution of value to the interpretation of Danish runic inscriptions and who are referred to in that work. In *Jon Skonvig og de andre runetegnere II*, 1958, I have given a critical survey of the study of runes in Denmark from the beginnings down to the publication of DaRun, but there pay special attention to the men who made sketches and drawings of our runic monuments.

Ludvig F.A. Wimmer gave a thorough review of the history of runology as long ago as 1895 in his paper called *Om undersøgelsen og tolkningen af vore runemindesmærker*.

A reader eager for more information than is provided in DaRun and the following few pages should turn to these works by Moltke and Wimmer.

The first pioneer was Ole Worm. He engineered the royal edict which was sent to all the bishops in 1622 ordering them to see to it that their parish priests submitted reports on runic monuments and other antiquities [1]. In 1643 – it took that long – Worm's *Danicorum monumentorum libri sex* were published, and a supplement followed seven years or so later.

For 200 years Worm's *Monumenta* occupied the magisterial position it deserved; but gradually its deficiencies became more and more apparent and more and more finds came to light. Interest in runology began to bear fruit in the early years of the nineteenth century. C.C. Rafn – known among other things as the founder of *Det kongelige nordiske Oldskriftselskab*, or the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries as he called it in English, but with no great repute as a runologist – published numerous papers on anything and everything to do with runes.

In 1841 Finnur Magnússon, an enormously learned Icelander working in Copenhagen, published the great and ill-starred tome called *Runamo*: in which he read natural cracks and fissures on a bed-rock surface in Blekinge as a heroic poem to do with Harald Wartooth.

A splendid and monumental work appeared over the years from 1866 to 1901, *The Old Northern Runic Monuments*, by George Stephens – born in Liverpool in 1813, educated at University College London, and from 1855 professor of English at the University of Copenhagen – or *Cheaping Haven* as he liked to call it. This work contains a wealth of factual information and very fine illustrations; philologically it is far from sound.

P.G.Thorsen's little runic collection, *De danske Runemindesmærker I-II*, 1864–1880, was better. Despite the long delay in completing it, the second part was finally issued in a great flurry because publication of another rune-book was imminent: and volume two is as slim and as meagre in its commentary as volume one is stout and expansive. But the drawings were chiefly made by J. Magnus-Petersen, Denmark's finest runic draughtsman, and they are an independent and precious contribution.

The runologists so far named all undertook their labours regardless of Rask's, Bopp's and Grimm's linguistic principles on which our modern philology is still based. The first work on Danish runes to build on those principles was Ludvig F. A. Wimmer's *De danske Runemindesmærker I-IV*, published between 1895 and 1908 and in an abridged one-volume edition by Lis Jacobsen in 1914. Wimmer was a sober and

reliable scholar who not only had a thorough grasp of philological laws and the principles of alphabet history but was also a lynxeyed reader of runes. Before his first volume appeared, he had laboriously cleared great tracts of runological jungle and he was the first scientifically-equipped pioneer in the field. The outcome was a total revaluation of runes, runic monuments and the relations between the futharks. Following sound lines of alphabet history, he derived runes from the Latin alphabet – still the most plausible theory – and his only fault lay in his needless attempt to find a one-to-one model for every character in the 24-rune futhark.

Unlike his predecessors, he went to make a personal inspection of every inscription – taking Professor Magnus-Petersen with him as his draughtsman – he had sketched for Thorsen too. (Magnus-Petersen's little book of reminiscences, *Minder fra min Virksomhed*, published in 1909, is a gem.) Very valuable material from their expeditions (the papier maché casts are particularly important) are in the so-called *Collectio Runologica Wimmeriana* in the Royal Library, Copenhagen (an admirable catalogue was issued in 1915).

Wimmer's work stood unassailed and justly renowned for its scholarship and accuracy, despite the fact that he relied more on his casts than on the results that could be obtained by proper lighting of a runic monument. He did not believe that photography had reached a stage where it could be profitably employed by the runologist.

The next and so far the last corpus of Danish runes appeared in 1942: *Danmarks runeindskrifter*, text and atlas, by Lis Jacobsen and Erik Moltke, with collaboration from Anders Bæksted and Karl Martin Nielsen. The spark came from Erik Arup's *Danmarks Historie I*, published in 1925. His view of the Viking Age in Denmark whetted Lis Jacobsen's appetite for controversy – and other people's too – and Lis Jacobsen was like herself in doing something about it. I spoke above of

232 Wimmer's notorious reading of the Sønder Vinge inscription. In the course of the discussion that followed the publication of Arup's book, Lis Jacobsen discovered a couple of serious errors in Wimmer's readings and at the same time found reason to doubt his narrow runological datings and many of his

“historical” stones. The result was a substantial output on runological topics and her “chronological” findings gained universal approval in scholarly circles.

About the same time as she was engaged on these important studies, Lis Jacobsen began to plan a supplement to Wimmer’s corpus and Erik Moltke, who had just graduated with a dissertation on a runological subject, was recruited for the task [2].

The new work was at first conceived as a supplement to Wimmer, including drawings and photographs in place of casts. But when Moltke succeeded in evolving effective photographic methods [3], the result was a completely new corpus, illustrated with dual photographs, one showing a stone in its natural state, the other showing it with inscription and ornament painted in with black water-colour. While Wimmer’s collection had only included Viking Age and medieval inscriptions, the new work also covered the Primitive Norse period and runic coins as well as inscriptions that are now known only from reports and drawings. Photographs, notes, casts and so on are now preserved in the Moltke-Jacobsen Samling in the “epigrafisk-runologisk laboratorium” of the National Museum in Copenhagen.

Unlike the earlier runic publications with their lengthy monograph treatment of the material, DaRun appeared as a manual. The corpus itself was followed by a transcription into a kind of normalised literary Old Danish, a glossary by Karl Martin Nielsen, a bibliography by Anders Bæksted, and – as an entirely novel and decidedly useful addition – an index of *realia*, which contains information on pretty well everything to do with runes and runic inscriptions. A few items selected at random may give a taste of the extensive and varied menu: facing animals, alphabets, bridge-building, double stones, forged inscriptions, grave-binding formulas, Herulians, crosses, healing stones, magic, nasalisation markers – and so on – not forgetting the most important entries of all on runes and dating and typology. This last section is not entirely satisfactory, for its division of the material into four runic periods is not strictly based on runological facts.

The void between DaRun and Wimmer’s volumes is as vast as that between Wimmer’s work and the work of his prede-

cessors. This depends first on our more realistic view of our ability (or lack of it) to date runic monuments, and second – and more notably still – on the photographic illustrations that were made available. Not because these provide very many new readings but because now, as never before, the scholar is given the opportunity of making his own objective judgment, whether his interest is in language, runic forms or the way in which inscriptions are laid out. Earlier runologists made drawings or commissioned drawings of what they saw and the reader had no means of checking the published results. It would hardly be possible to find a more accurate delineator than Magnus-Petersen, but even so, no one could undertake individual study of runes and inscriptions on the basis of his drawings. It is different with photographs, especially when they are taken in the most favourable and best-angled illumination, using flood-lighting or flash or whatever, so that every worked groove appears with a clarity which a student who has never seen a brilliantly spot-lit rune stone simply cannot conceive. This has put a completely new tool in the hands of the epigraphic and iconographic research-worker. That was what was new in the rune book of Lis Jacobsen and myself, far more than any fresh readings or interpretations. Nevertheless, the fact that every single rune on a painted in photograph in effect represents a new reading seems to have escaped the attention of a good many scholars who confine their interests to linguistic forms. There is striking instance of this in the present book, when I maintain for example, with complete confidence, that the Nørre Nærå stone was carved by the same man as the Gørlev stone – solely on the evidence of the photographs available in DaRun.

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But if there is any doubt, no photograph can ever be a substitute for the rune stone itself. Go and look at it.

A productive period followed the publication of DaRun, when the principal authors and their collaborators made numerous contributions on runological topics. Four works may be especially mentioned, three by Anders Bæksted, *Islands runeskrifter* (1942), *Runerne, deres historie og brug* (1943), and *Målruner og troldruner*. *Runemagiske studier* (1952); and one by K.M. Nielsen, *Om dateringen af de senurnordiske*

runeindskrifter, synkopen og 16tegnets futharken (1970), and several other papers collected in Karl Martin Nielsen, *Jellingstudier og andre afhandlinger*, a birthday volume, published in 1977.

Harry Andersen, who taught runology for many years in the University of Copenhagen, has been our most prolific solver of runological puzzles. His most important papers were collected in a well-deserved birthday volume, *Runologica*, published in 1971.

In recent years Niels Åge Nielsen has written some substantial and fascinating studies in which metrics have been pressed into service — rather more forcefully than may seem warranted — in his attempts to find fresh solutions to some of the most teasing of early Scandinavian inscriptions. He has continued these metrical studies in a rather monomaniac manner which often leads to farfetched results (Niels Åge Nielsen, *Danske Runeindskrifter, et udvalg med kommentarer*, a birthday volume, published 1983).

DaRun has been out of print for some years. In many details it is out of date. Where is the young man or woman who will undertake the next corpus? Let us pray that whoever it is will read what is on the stone and not what he or she would like to see there.

NOTES

- 1 Frank Jørgensen, *Præsteindberetninger til Ole Worm*, udg. af Landbohistorisk Selskab, I-II, 1970-74.
- 2 Cf. E. Moltke, *Danmarks runeindskrifter*, in *Danske opslagsværker* 14, 1973.
- 3 E. Moltke, *Tekniske hjælpemidler og metoder i epigrafiens tjeneste*, *Fornvännen* 1932, pp. 321 ff. Cf. idem, *Jon Skonvig og de andre runetegnere*, II, 1958, pp. 252 ff.

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Table of Inscriptions

Danish inscriptions

The list comprises all the Danish inscriptions known to the author – and examined by him. Among the bracteates only the most legible are included, and the coins are represented by only a small part of the material found in DaRun. Inscriptions not reproduced in the main text or in connection with the illustrations are cited here in their entirety. The numbers in the margin refer to the numbers in DaRun, and the numbers of the bracteates and the coins also correspond with DaRun. The bracteates are listed alphabetically, but with 'bracteate' as the head word. This is the system: after the head word and topographical information (see the map: pp. 14), the place where the object is now to be found, the year in which it was discovered or first mentioned, and then the runic period in which it belongs (cf. pp. 24f.) follow in parentheses. Then comes, when necessary, a reproduction of the inscription, and finally the page references, *the first number* of which refers to the main treatment. An asterisk * before a page number indicates that the object or inscription is totally or partially reproduced on that page. † signifies that the object has disappeared. Round brackets within an inscription denote uncertain readings, whereas square brackets indicate unreadable or lost runes.

Number

DaRun

- 416 "Absalon's ring" (Nat.Mus.Cop. Known since 1565. *Per.* 3). – 487, 355, *486
Aggersborg plaster inscriptions, North Jutland (the north walls of the church. 1976. *Per.* 3). – Chancel: 1. uk ... s(a)ul ... a ... – 2. aue maria. – 3. Confused inscription. – Nave: 4. Confused inscription. – 5. (n)annabar(i)s???mot???? : | (pater). – 6. gup : g??æ : thorlich : or : hæræ : stat : ther : pæter : s(ual)e : mæc : scref : am0en). – 7. margareta. – 8. b?????. – 9. (t)bar(e)æu. – 10. tv(i)?k. – 11. auæ mar afcht(u)k?. – (Several bind-runes). – 428, 410, *429
- 222-23 *Allerslev limestone ashlars 1-2*, Sjælland (north doorway of the church, plastered over. 1915. *Per.* 3). – 422, *423, 429
- 336 † *Allerup tombstone*, Skåne (c. 1627. *Per.* 3). – auæ : maria : gragia : þominus : tækum : bænaþikta : tu : in : muliæribus : æt : bænaþiktus : fruktus : uæntis : tui : amæn : hær : ligr : hilþulf : suin : sun : uoþær (gragia evidently a slip for gracia, uoþær for unþær – Hail Mary, (full of) grace. The Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. Amen. Hereunder lies Hildulv, son of Sven). – 415, *272
- 201 † *Allerup stone*, Fyn (c. 1627. *Per.* 2). – ... sun : þolfs : han : hanti : stin : þansi : a : ... | ... sati : aft : faþur[: o](k) : moþor : (t)on(o) · (N.N.,

Number
DaRun

- son of Tholv, he fetched this stone in ... (and) set (it) up in memory of (his) father and (his) mother Tonne (?). – 310, 329
- 237 *Alsted stone*, Sjælland (in the church. 1643. *Per.* 2). – eskil : sati : sina : þesi : eftiR : ystin : auk : flir : brupur : sin : sun : ystis : apal : miki (Eskil set up these stones in memory of Østen and his brother Flir, son of Østen, Athalmerki (= 'chief banner', or Athalmegi = 'noble sword')). – *272
- † *Arrild stone*, see †Nørre Brarup stone
- 121 *Asferg stone*, North Jutland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1795. *Per.* 2). – 318, *317
- Asmild stone*, North Jutland (in the church. 1950. *Per.* 2). – 306, 189, 240, 302, *305, 308
- Asmindrup plaster inscriptions*, see Sønder Asmindrup plaster inscriptions
- 168 *Astrup brick*, North Jutland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1908. *Per.* 3). – *439, *399
- 189 † *Avnslev stone*, Fyn (1623. *Per.* 2). – 156, *152, 164
- 294 *Baldringe stone*, Skåne (in the churchyard. 1693. *Per.* 2). – 267, *270, 279, *286, 344
- 98 *Bjerregrav stone 1*, North Jutland (by the church. 1868. *Per.* 2). – tuft(a) : r(i)[sp](i) : stin : þani : auftiR : tum ... | uar : s(i) ... n [:] þikn : saR : u ... | ... (u)r : tuika : hin (Tove erected this stone in memory of her husband, Tomme (?), ... 'thegn'. He ... Tvegge (with the surname) Whetstone). – 344
- 99 *Bjerregrav stone 2*, North Jutland (by the church. 1884. *Per.* 2). – kuþa : risþi : stin : þansi : auft | (i)R : þurbiurn : buta : sin : | miuk : kuþan : þikn : ian | þurþr : rist : runaR | þasi (Gyde erected this stone in memory of Thorbjørn, her husband, a very noble 'thegn'. And Thord cut these runes). – *289
- 14 *Bjolderup tombstone*, South Jutland (Gottorp Castle. Before 1717. *Per.* 3). – 409, 407, *408, 410
- Bjælke stone*, see Åker stone 3
- 287 *Bjäresjö stone 1*, Skåne (on the outside of the churchyard wall, east. C. 1627. *Per.* 2). – × kari × sati × stain ... uftiR × aulfun × (Kåre set up ... stone in memory of Ølvun). – *270, 345
- 288 *Bjäresjö stone 2*, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. C. 1627. *Per.* 2). – × aaki × sati × stain × þansi × aftiR × ulf × brupur × sin × harþa × kuþan × trak × (Åge set up this stone in memory of Ulv, his brother, a very noble 'drengr'). –
- 289 *Bjäresjö stone 3*, Skåne (Bergsjöholm manor, the park. 1845. *Per.* 2). – fraþi × risþi × st(e)n × þansi × aftiR × ulaf × mak × sia × | × trek × harþa × kuþan × (sia = sin. – Frede erected this stone in memory of Olav, his 'måg' (= kinsman by marriage), a very noble 'drengr'. – 345
- 360 *Björketorp stone*, Blekinge (original site, the meeting point of Björke-

torp, Leråkra and Listerby. C. 1627. *Per. I*). – 141, *143, 137, 139, 147, 168, 224, 339

Blekinge group. – 137, 147

Blasinge lead tablet, Sjælland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1983 *Per. 3*). – The longest runic inscription in Denmark, Latin, found while this book was in proof; 3.7 × 12 cm, the runes 3-4 mm. The following is Marie Stoklund's reading and interpretation, cf. *Nyt fra Nationalmuseet* nr. 22, 1984. - × coniuro uos · sæ(ptæm) · so(ro)ræs (a) ... (s) · ræ(s) ... | (æ)lffri(c)a · affri?(a) soria affoc(a) · aff(rica)l)a · coniuro uos (æt) con · tæstor · pær patræm (·) | æt filium æt spiritum (·) sanctum (·) u(t) n(o)n · nocæatis · stam famulum (·) dæi · næquæ | i(n) × hocalis · næquæ in mæmbris · næquæ in mædullis · n(æ)c in ullo com(p) | [ag]line mæmbrorum æius · ut inhabit(æt) · in te uirtus cristi · altiss(i) | [m] (i) eccæ crru(ucæ)m (d)onmini · fukiti (·) par(tæ)s · (a)duær(sæ) · ui[n] (cit) (l)æ(o) · dæ tr(i)bu i(u) | da radiX · dauit · in nominæ patris æt fi(l)ii · æt spiritus sancti amæn× · cristus · uincit · cristus · ræknit · cristus · impæræt · cristus · lipæræt ++ | cristus tæ bænædicat · ab oomi · malo · (a) ... · a · k · l · a · batær · nostær · x. (Þ transcribed as d, ʀ as æ. ʁ as e. Numerous bindrunes and a special q-rune. stam = istum, inhabitæt = inhabitat, crru(ucæ)m = crucem. donmini (on bind-rune) = domini, fukiti = fugite, ræknit = regnat, impæræt = imperat, lipæræt = liberat, bænædicat = benedicit, oomi = omni, batær = pater, hocalis with a false h.. – I conjure you (seven sisters) ... Elfrica (?), Affrina (?), Soria, Affoca, Affricala (or Affricaia), I conjure you and invoke (you) by the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost that you harm not this servant of God, neither in eyes nor in limbs nor in marrow nor in any joint of limbs, (but rather) that the strenght of the most high Christ may inhabit you. Behold the cross of the Lord! Flee you hostile adversaries! The Lion of the tribe of Judea, the Root of David, has conquered. In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. Amen. Christ conquers, Christ reigns, Christ rules, Christ liberates, Christ blesses you, From all evil ... a-g-l-a. Our Father). – 493

Bodils, see Bodilsker

- 374 *Bodilsker stone 1*, Bornholm (Rønne mus. Before 1843. *Per. 2?*). – Fragment a: ... (i) R[·] r ... – Fragment b: ... (k)a (·) b ...
- (375) *Bodilsker stone 2*, Bornholm (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1872). – tnb(m). – Spurious)
- 376 *Bodilsker stone 3*, Bornholm (in the church porch. 1882. *Per. 2?*). – ... þurkil × auk × alfkil × r(is) ... (i)n × þina · eftiR × eykil × faþur × ... (... Thorkil and Alvkil erected this stone in memory of Økil, (their) father ...)
- 377 *Bodilsker stone 4*, Bornholm (south wall of the church tower. 1883. *Per. 2?*). – ...?a?? (l)itu · h ... · s(t)ain · eftiR · þurfast · brupur | sin | auk · kuþki ((X and Y) had this stone cut in memory of Thorfast, their

- brother, 'auk' Gudke. – The author translates the last two words, which are not placed in the rune-band, but in the middle of the stone, as: Gudke hewed (the runes, cf. Øster Marie stone 4 auka lit = let hew). Others translate: and Gudke (viz. X and Y ... jointly with Gudke), and take the two words to be a later addition)
- 378 *Bodilsker stone 5*, Bornholm (in the church porch. 1911. *Per.* 2?). – asbiarn · lit · rita stain iftiR · butirþu · kunu · sina · kup · litin · ant · i (Esbern had the stone set up in memory of Botirda, his wife. God relieve her spirit forever. – Swedish rune-carver). – *331, *262, *272, 328, 378
- 234 † *Boeslunde church-bell*, Sjælland (c. 1685. *Per.* 3). – 444, 441, 468
- 410 *Bornholm amulet*, Bornholm (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1821. *Per.* 2/3). – 362, *361
- Bornholm, Christiansø copper plate*, see Christiansø copper plate
- Bracteate 38 Bolbro 1*, Fyn (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1852. *Per.* 1). – Rlut : eaþl lauR (swastika) owa
- Bracteate 39 Bolbro 2*, Fyn (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1852. *Per.* 1). – 120
- Bracteate 63 Börringe*, Skåne (Hist.Mus.Sth. Before 1855. *Per.* 1). – laukaR tantulu : al (nt a bind-rune)
- Bracteate 79 Danmark 1*, Denmark (Mus. f. Vor- und Frühgesch., Berlin. Before 1842. *Per.* 1). – lkaR (cf. bracteate 53 Maglemose 2, 60 Sjælland 1, 58 Lyngø Gyde, 65 Hammenhög and Stephens 35 Sweden)
- Bracteate 9 Darum 1*, North Jutland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1884, three specimens. *Per.* 1). – frohila laþu
- Bracteate 13 Darum 5*, North Jutland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1884. *Per.* 1). – niujil alu
- Bracteate 74 Eskatorp*, Halland (Hist.Mus.Sth. 1867. *Per.* 1). – See bracteate 66 Väsby. – 118, *111
- Bracteate 48 Faxø*, Sjælland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1827, six specimens. *Per.* 1). – (f)oslau
- Bracteate 45 Femø*, Femø (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1906. *Per.* 1). – 114, *111, 116
- Bracteate 42 Fyn 1*, Fyn (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1689. *Per.* 1). – Cf. bracteate 54 Maglemose 3. – *109
- Bracteate 43 Fyn 2*, Fyn (Nat.Mus.Cop. C. 1687. *Per.* 1). – n(e) · : tþllll
- Bracteate Gudme 1*, Fyn (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1982. *Per.* 1). – undR (= bracteate 35 Killerup 1). – 120, *115
- Bracteates Gudme 2-4*, Fyn (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1982. *Per.* 1). – (f)uþar. – 120, *115
- Bracteate Gudme 5*, Fyn (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1982. *Per.* 1). – Cf. bracteate 39 Bolbro 2. – 120
- Bracteate 56 Halskov*, Sjælland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1906 *Per.* 1). – n?eturfahidelapoþmhlisiiæiaugrþnbkeiaR (fahide = painted, carved)

- Bracteate 65 Hammenhög, Skåne* (Hist.Mus.Sth. Before 1860. *Per. I*). – ?(l)kaR (cf. bracteate 79 Danmark 1)
- Bracteate 49 Højstrup, Sjælland* (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1918. *Per. I*). – laþu
- Bracteate 35 Killerup 1, Fyn* (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1874. *Per. I*). – undR (= bracteate Gudme 1). – 120, 114
- Bracteate Kitnæs, Sjælland* (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1966. *Per. I*). – 1Et. – 72
- Bracteate 63a Kläggeröd, Skåne* (Hist.Mus.Lund. C. 1890. *Per. I*). – alu
- Bracteate 55 Lellinge, Sjælland* (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1845. *Per. I*). – *111
- Bracteate Lindkær, North Jutland* (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1957. *Per. I*). *26, 25
- Bracteate 53 Maglemose 2, Sjælland* (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1852. *Per. I*). – (l)kaR (cf. bracteate 79 Danmark 1)
- Bracteate 54 Maglemose 3, Sjælland* (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1852. *Per. I*). – ᚢᚰᚱ ᚹᚲᚱᚹᚹᚹᚹᚹ ᚱᚱᚱ (probably includes the man's name houaR and the magic (protective) word alu. – Cf. bracteate 42 Fyn 1)
- Bracteate 22 Over Hornbæk 3, North Jutland* (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1848. *Per. I*). – Cf. bracteate Vendsyssel with the same stamp. – *26, 25
- Bracteate 60 Sjælland 1* (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1689. *Per. I*). – (l)kaR (cf. bracteate 79 Danmark 1)
- Bracteate 61 Sjælland 2* (one specimen in Nat.Mus.Cop., another in Hist.Mus.Sth. Before 1852. *Per. I*). – 117, *111
- Bracteate 8 Skodborg, South Jutland* (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1863. *Per. I*). – Cf. bracteate Sædding. – 118, 94, *111, 147
- Bracteate 16 Skonager 3, North Jutland* (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1870, three specimens. *Per. I*). – niuwila lþ(u)
- Bracteate 6 Skrydsrup, South Jutland* (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1841. *Per. I*). – laukaR alu (ka a bind-rune)
- Bracteate 67 Skåne 1* (one specimen in Nat.Mus.Cop., another in Oldsaksamlingen, Oslo. Before 1831. *Per. I*). – 117, *111, 146
- Bracteate 68 Skåne 2* (Nat.Mus.Cop. Before 1831. *Per. I*). – fuwu (or fuþu)
- Bracteate 69 Skåne 3* (Hist.Mus.Lund. Beginning of 9th century. *Per. I*). – ota (cf. bracteate 76 Tjurkö 2)
- Bracteate 70 Skåne 4* (Oldsaksamlingen, Oslo. Before 1834. *Per. I*). – eltil
- Bracteate 59 Slangerup, Sjælland* (Nat.Mus.Cop. Before 1817. *Per. I*). – alu
- Bracteate Sædding, North Jutland* (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1942. *Per. I*). – ????(u)laliþhimRuiih?hslhui(h)daeRuumihhhiR (same workshop as bracteate 8 Skodborg)
- Bracteate 75 Tjurkö 1, Blekinge* (Hist.Mus.Sth. 1817. *Per. I*). – 119, *110, 118, 147
- Bracteate 76 Tjurkö 2, Blekinge* (Hist.Mus.Lund. 1817. *Per. I*). – ota (cf. bracteate 69 Skåne 3)

- Bracteate Vendssyssel, North Jutland* (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1975. Per. 1). –
 (Same stamp as bracteate Over Hornbæk 3)
Bracteate 66 Väsby, Skåne (Hist.Mus.Sth. Before 1855. Per. 1). –
 ᚱᚢᚾᛁᚰᚠᚦᚪᚲᚴᚩᚼᚻᚷᚹᚺᚽᚿ = 118, 106
 (Cf. ᚱᚢᚾᛁᚰᚠᚦᚪᚲᚴᚩᚼᚻᚷᚹᚺᚽᚿ = bracteate 74 Eskatorp)
Bracteate 25 Ølst, North Jutland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1863. Per. 1). – hwg
 (or hag) alu
Bracteate 29 Års 2, North Jutland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1914. Per. 1).
 laukaR
Bracteate 64 Åsum, Skåne (Hist.Mus.Sth. 1882. Per. 1). – 114, *110,
 116, 124
- 219 *Bregninge stone L, Lolland* (Nat.Mus.Cop. C. 1627. Per. 2). – (ā)s(a)
 [:] karpi [:] kubl : | þusi : aft : tuka · | sun [:] (si)n : auk [:] tuka :
 haklaks : | sunaR · (Åse made this monument in memory of Toke,
 her son and Toke Haklangsson's). – 344
- 184 *Bregninge tombstone T, Tåsinge* (in the church. Before 1701. Per. 3).
 – 415, 245, 317, 339, 344, *413, 468
Brogård stone, see Klemensker stone 3
Brohusen stone, see Øster Marie stone 4
Brunsgård stone, see Ny Larsker stone 3
 (*Bräkne-Hoby font*, Blekinge (in the church, cf. Sveriges kyrkor, Ble-
 kinge). – Not runes, stone-cutter's mark)
- 32 *Brøndum building stone*, North Jutland (Nat.Mus.Cop. In the 1890s.
 Per. 3). – (h)ælc? ... uil : ... | (reversed runes) ... u : er
- 31 *Brøndum font*, North Jutland (in the church. 1841. Per. 3). – + a + s +
 æ + r (or + r + a + s + æ) (a man's name). – 450
Brøn's carpenter's runes, South Jutland (in the roof construction of
 the church. 1953. Per. 3). – fuþorkhn (and) þiprik (a man's name). –
 440
Bustorf stone, see Haddeby stone 3
- 29 *Bække stone 1*, North Jutland (by the church. 1810. Per. 2). – 228,
 *247, 314, 344
- 30 *Bække stone 2*, North Jutland (original site, part of a restored ship-
 setting in the parish. 1858. Per. 2). – 386, *382, *383
- 165 *Borglum column base*, North Jutland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1881. Per. 3). –
 422, 333, 414, *418
- 258 *Bösarp stone*, Skåne (Hist.Mus.Lund. 1906–14. Per. 2). – tuki : sati : ...
 (Toke placed ...) – 256, 231, *258, *261, *264, 296
- 172 *Bostrup censer*, Fyn (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1702. Per. 3). – magistær :
 ia[k](o)bus : ruffus : me feciþ : (Latin: Master Jacob Red made me)
- 224 *Bårse font*, Sjælland (in the church. 1843. Per. 3). – 452, *399, 450,
 *451
- 225 *Bårse stone*, Sjælland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1822. Per. 3). – þes ...
- 419 *Cantebury charm* (MS Cottonianum Caligula A XV 4to 119v–120r.

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- later pagination 123^v-124^r, British Library. 1705. *Per.* 2). – *360, 243, 366, 497
Christiansø copper plate, Bornholm (Bornholm's mus. 1977. Dated 1756). – 503
Coins (Per. 2?). – *391ff.
- 325 *Dagstorp stone*, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1910 *Per.* 2). – × si(k)mtr × sati × stin × þansi × iftiR × klakR × faþur × sin × (Sigmund placed this stone in memory of Klak, his father)
Dalby bronze stylus, Skåne (Hist.Mus.Lund. 1961. *Per.* 3). – 473, *469
- 298 *Dalby stone*, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1931. *Per.* 2). – 318, *317
- 125 *Dalbyover stone*, North Jutland (in the church porch, head downwards. 1882. *Per.* 2). – tufi : kitu : sun : sati : ... | ... i : filaka : sin : | fustra : þurknus (Tue, son of 'kita' (gen. kitu), placed (this stone in memory of N.N.), his partner, Thorgny's foster-son (?)). – 345
Danevirke stone, see Haddeby stone 3
- 19 *Darum aspersorium (?)*, North Jutland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1911, *Per.* 3). – Runes and rune-like characters
Drosselbjerg plaster inscription, Sjælland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1952. *Per.* 3). – 430, *429
Dublin antler, Ireland (Nat.Mus. of Ireland. 1980. *Per.* 2). – 364, *363
Dublin futharks (stick), Ireland (Nat.Mus. of Ireland. 1980. *Per.* 2). – *364, 365
- 129 *Durup stone*, North Jutland (*Nørager manor*. 1885. *Per.* 2). – ... i : stain : þasi : at : tuka | ... (n) : kuþan (N.N. placed this stone in memory of Toke ... a noble ('thegn' or the like)). – *272
Dybäck stone, see Östra Vemmenhög stone
- 185 *Egense font*, Fyn (in the church. 1903. *Per.* 3). – 450, *449
- 233 *Eggeslevmagle stone*, Sjælland (in the church porch. 1871. *Per.* 3). – ulnop (a man's name)
- 37 *Egtved stone*, North Jutland (in the church porch. 1863. *Per.* 2). – ... at | fai(n) | [i] (t)u | i suiu | raist | ... uþiR | aft | bruþur | stain | sasi | skarni | ... ((N.N. made this monument in memory of) ???at, the Painted(?); he died at Svía. Carved (runes), brother in memory of brother. This stone 'skarni' (?) ...). – 192, 312, 343
Egvad carpenter's runes, North Jutland (in the roof construction of the church. 1953. *Per.* 3). – [f]uþorkh. – 440
- 107 *Egå stone*, North Jutland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1814, 1839. *Per.* 2). – alfkil | uk | hns | suniR | risþu : stin : þansi : ift : | · mana : sin : frinta : þans × uas · lantirþi | kitils | þis | | nuruna | (Alvkil and his sons erected this stone in memory of Manne, their kinsman, who was factor of Ketil the Norwegian). – *186, 297, 344, 379

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- 52 *Ejsing amulet stone*, North Jutland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1901. *Per.* 3). –
Runes and rune-like characters
Elisenhof comb, South Jutland (Gottorp Castle. 1965. *Per.* 2). – 370,
*371, 389, 466
Elleköping stone, Skåne (Kristianstad mus. 1965. *Per.* 2). – *377
- 151 *Else tombstone*, North Jutland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1769. *Per.* 3). – 414
Eltang plaster inscription, North Jutland (in the nave, north wall,
middle, c. 1 m above the floor. 1967. *Per.* 3). – k?ri(s)???o ...
- 35 *Eltang stone (tombstone?)*, North Jutland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1866. *Per.*
3). – i 𐌺 𐌲 iæþik?? ...
Erfordensis, *Codex* nr 23 8vo (Erfurt library. 1841. *Per.* 3). – *498
- 255 *Esbønderup ashlar*, Sjælland (in the chancel, on the outside of the
north wall. 1894. *Per.* 3). – mæ (or æy)

Farso stone, North Jutland (in the church porch. 1955. *Pers.* 2). –
tu(s)ti : uk : asbiurn : rsþu : stin : þānsi : a(f)t : tufa : bruþur | : (sin)
(Toste and Esbern erected this stone in memory of Tue, their
brother). – *264, *275
- 145 *Ferslev stone 1*, North Jutland (in the church porch. 1654. *Per.* 2). – [:]
(t)uki : sati : stin : þānsi : aft : | : āsta : sun : sin : lutaris : sun [:] (Toke
(?), son of 'lutari', placed this stone in memory of Åste, his son)
- 146 † *Ferslev stone 2*, North Jutland (1841. *Per.* 3). – ... sti : runar : þ(e) ...
- 238 *Fjenneslev stone*, Sjælland (by the church. C. 1830. *Per.* 3). – 404,
*406
The first 9 runes of the inscription were also cut (perhaps in the
Middle Ages) on a *limestone ashlar* which was originally in the
church tower; the ashlar was found in 1979 in a stone wall on a near-
by farm (Sorø mus.). – 498
- 132 *Flejsborg stone*, North Jutland (in the church porch. 1851. *Per.* 2). –
þurkal : sati : stin : aft : ... sun : faþur : sin : (Thorkel placed the stone
in memory of N.N.'s son, his father)
- 192 *Flemløse stone 1*, Fyn (Jægerspris Castle. 1606. *Per.* 2). – 156, 80,
152, 154, *155, 164, 227, 310, 317
- 193 *Flemløse stone 2*, Fyn (Jægerspris Castle. C. 1840. *Per.* 2). – 103,
156, 164, 166, 224
- 319 † *Flädie inscription*, Skåne (before 1884. *Per.* 3). – Drawn in charcoal
on the church wall; without meaning
- 262 *Fosie stone*, Skåne (by the Fosie-Lockarp road, southeast of the par-
sonage. C. 1627. *Per.* 2). – as(b)jarn × rispi [x] stin × þānsi × aftiR :
tuark : filaka × sin : trik : kuþan (Esbern erected this stone in me-
mory of Dverg, his partner, a noble 'dreng'). – 343
- 253 *Frederiksberg amulet stone*, Sjælland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1866. *Per.* 3). –
līþ(r)c (or līþ(rak)) | funþ | y
- 10 *Froslev stick*, South Jutland (Gottorp Castle. Before 1864. *Per.* 1/2). –
gR?liR ½ (or ?m?lim ½). – 130

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- 259 *Fuglie stone 1*, Skåne (on a mound near the church. C. 1627. *Per.* 2). – 240, 219, 238, *242, 312
- 260 *Fuglie stone 2*, Skåne (Toftegård. 1876. *Per.* 2). – ati : risþi : stin : þasi : aft : þurstin : sun : sin (Atte erected this stone in memory of Thorsten, his son)
- 72 *Funder column base*, North Jutland (in the church doorway. 1873. *Per.* 3). – 422, *418
- 25 *Føvling tombstone*, North Jutland (in the church porch. 1638. *Per.* 3). – *409, 34, 438
- 173 *Fåborg censer*, Fyn (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1701. *Per.* 3). – magistær : iakobus : ruffus : fabær : me feciþ : guþ : si (several bind-runes. – Latin: Master Jakob Red, smith, made me. Danish: God bless). – 447
- 11-12 † *Gallehus golden horns 1-2*, South Jutland (1639, 1734. *Per.* 1). – 81, 23, *82, *83, *84, *85, *86, 98, 108, 131, 135, 146
- 152 *Galtrup tombstone*, North Jutland (in the south wall of the church tower. 1769. *Per.* 3). – 414
Gammelsogn carpenter's runes, North Jutland (in the roof construction of the church. C. 1970. *Per.* 3). – fup. – 440
Garbølle wooden box, see Stenmagle wooden box
- 112 ?† *Gesing stone 2*, North Jutland (1623. *Per.* 3). – Drawing without meaning
- 111 *Gesing tombstone* (stone 1), North Jutland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1623. *Per.* 3). – 410, 317, *412, 444, 467
- 355a † *Getinge stone 2*, Halland (1830. *Per.* 3). – æinar iok (Einar cut – scil. the runes)
- 355 *Getinge tombstone* (stone 1), Halland (in the church porch. 1668. *Per.* 3). – *403, 245
- 45 *Give glass pane*, North Jutland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1904. *Per.* 3). – *426, 445, 480
- 130 *Giver stone*, North Jutland (in the church porch. 1895. *Per.* 2). – kali : sati : stin | þansi : ift : þursin | faþur : sia : ha(þ) | a : kuþan : þign (sia = sin, haþa = harþa, þursin = þurstin. The carver was careless or did not know the runes. – Kale placed this stone in memory of Thorsten, his father, a very noble 'thegn')
- 209 *Glavendrup stone*, Fyn (original site, part of a ship-setting in Glavendrup. 1804. *Per.* 2). – 224, 106, 186, 224, *225, *227f., 243, 246, 248, 285, 289, 295, 297, 308, 310, 342
- 338 *Glemminge stone*, Skåne (in the churchyard wall. 1644. *Per.* 2). – 232, *233, 236f., 240, 243, 344f.
- 122 *Glenstrup stone 1*, North Jutland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1623. *Per.* 2). – : þuriR : risþi : stin : þansi : iftiR : kunar : faþu | r : sin : (Thore erected this stone in memory of Gunnar, his father)
- 123 *Glenstrup stone 2*, North Jutland (in the church porch. 1877. *Per.* 2). – 267, *260, *287, 342

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- 251 *Glostrup amulet* (fossil), Sjælland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1846. *Per.* 3?). – tu
- 226 *Glumsø stone*, Sjælland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1910. *Per.* 2). – ... ra(ti) : ... |
... : at : ma(i) ... | ... (u) : nafa : ... | ... k : þika (... in memory of Ma???)
(with the surname) Fist ...). – 344
Gottorp stone, see Haddeby stone 4
Gravlev stick, North Jutland (private collection. 1946. *Per.* 3). – 356,
*357
- 91 *Grensten stone*, North Jutland (by the church. C. 1629. *Per.* 2). –
316, 240, *270, 315, 327, 343, 400
- 44 *Grindsted stone*, North Jutland (Grindsted mus. 1925. *Per.* 2). – ...
(s)i : uft : ku(n)[a]r : tr ... (... this monument (or the like) in memory
of Gunnar ...)
Grødby stone, see Åker stone 1
- 147 † *Gudum stone*, North Jutland (1636. *Per.* 3). – ysten : let : resa : sten :
þena : for (:) siol × upuakins : faþur : sins × (Østen had this stone
erected for the soul of Utvagen (= ‘unwashed’), his father). – 403,
343
Gullev plaster inscription, North Jutland (cancel, north wall, above
niche, plastered over. 1976. *Per.* 3). – 430, *429, 445
- 358 † *Gummarp stone*, Blekinge (c. 1627. *Per.* 1). – 78, *76, 103, 137, 139,
142, 146
- 143 *Gunderup stone 1*, North Jutland (in the church porch. C. 1629. *Per.*
2). – 302, 213, *303, 306
- 144 *Gunderup stone 2*, North Jutland (in the church porch. C. 1629. *Per.*
2). – 374, 153, *375
- 413 *Gunhild cross* (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1650. *Per.* 3). – 454, *455, 499
Gyldenså stone, see Øster Marie stone 1
- 53 *Gylling stone*, North Jutland (in the church porch. 1839. *Per.* 2). –
tuki : þurkisl : sun : raisi : stain : || þansi : aft : ... || kuþan : auk :
risbiik : sin : buruþur : (Toke, son of Thorgisl, erected this stone in
memory of ... good ... and ‘risbiik’, his brother). – 345
- 20 *Gørding finger-ring*, North Jutland (Nat.Mus.Cop. Before 1891. *Per.*
3). – 488, *486
- 239 *Gørlev stone 1*, Sjælland (in the church porch. 1921. *Per.* 2). – 158,
28, 113, 136, 144, 151, 164, 166, 168, 170f., *173, *174, *175, 180f.,
182, 215f., 223f., 233, 236, 239, 244, 248, 297, 308, 344, 367, 485,
508
Gørlev stone 2, Sjælland (in the church porch. 1964. *Per.* 2). – 239,
*237
Gårdlösa bow fibula, Skåne (Hist.Mus.Sth. 1949. *Per.* 1). – 128, 122,
*127
- 329 *Gårdstånga stone 1*, Skåne (Flyinge park. C. 1627. *Per.* 2). – : þulfr :
uk : ulfr : risþu : stina : þise : ufter : asmut : liba : felaga : sin :
(Tholv and Ulv erected these stones in memory of Asmund Lippe,
their partner)

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- 330 *Gårdstånga stone 2*, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1867. *Per. 2*). – ... usti : auk : kunar : ... u : stina : þasi : aiftiR : kn ... biurn : filaka : sin[a]|| : þiR : trikaR : uaRu : u??[?]??isiR : i : uikiku (???usti and Gunnar erected (or placed) these stones in memory of Kn??? (and) ???björn, their partners. The warriors were (far famed?) on Viking raids). – 312
- 331 *Gårdstånga stone 3*, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1867. *Per. 2*). – asur × sati × stina × þisi : iftiR | tuba : (the runes si iftiR are inverted, cf. Dalby stone. After the inscription a schematic Thor's hammer. – Asser placed these stones in memory of Tobbe). – *247, *272, 345
- Haddeby bone*, South Jutland (Gottorp Castle. 1966. *Per. 2/3*). – *355
- Haddeby comb*, South Jutland (Gottorp Castle. 1962. *Per. 2*). – 349, 151, *351
- Haddeby peg* (or wooden nail), South Jutland (Gottorp Castle. 1966-69. *Per. 2*). – 370, 151, 160, *371
- 471 *Haddeby soapstone vessel*, South Jutland (Gottorp Castle. 1935. *Per. 2*). – 356, 472
- Haddeby stick 1*, South Jutland (Gottorp Castle. 1966-69. *Per. 2*). – 371, *29, 104, 149, 153, 160, 179f., 193, 199, 367, *368
- Haddeby stick 2*, South Jutland (Gottorp Castle. 1966-69. *Per. 2*). – 371, *29, 104, 153, 160, 180, 188, 367, *369
- 1 *Haddeby stone 1*, South Jutland (Gottorp Castle. 1798. *Per. 2*). – 196, 28, 34, 193, *197, 200, *270, 290, 308, 312, 345
- 2 *Haddeby stone 2*, South Jutland (Gottorp Castle. 1797. *Per. 2*). – 194, 172, 188, 193, *195, 200, 308, 374
- 3 *Haddeby stone 3*, South Jutland (Gottorp Castle. 1857. *Per. 2*). – *196, 193, 200, 308
- 4 *Haddeby stone 4*, South Jutland (Gottorp Castle. 1887. *Per. 2*). – 195, 153, 188, 193, *194, 200, 304, 308, 344, 368, 376
- Hagenskov stone*, see Sønderby stone
- Halahlult stone*, see Åryd alphabet stone
- 71 † *Hammel corbel* (stone 2), North Jutland (1838. *Per. 3*). – 422
- 70 *Hammel stone 1*, North Jutland (in the south wall of the nave. 1863. *Per. 2*). – 153, *150, 343
- 51 *Handbjerg font*, North Jutland (in the church. 1841. *Per. 3*). – 450, *449
- Handest stone*, see Glenstrup stone 2
- 48 *Hanning stone*, North Jutland (in the south wall of the chancel. 1843. *Per. 3*). – 402, 231, *401, 410
- 299 † *Hardeberga church-bell*, Skåne (1692. *Per. 3*). – 444, 426
- 274 † *Hassle-Bösarp stone*, Skåne (1852. *Per. 2*). – After Bruzelius: ... ikhulrir?? ... (the name Ighulbiorn is proposed in Danmarks gamle Personnavne)
- Haverslund stone*, see Øster Løgum stone

- Hedeby, the stick from*, see Haddeby stick 1
Hedeby stone, see Haddeby stone 1
- 174 *Heden censer*, Fyn (Odense mus. 1701. *Per.* 3). – + mæstær røjþ + kras dabor toto diæ : sik(ue) : ago : koti | die (several bind-runes. – Danish: Master Red. Latin: Tomorrow I (scil. the censer) shall be fed all day, and thus I work every day). – 448
- 190 *Helnæs stone*, Fyn (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1860. *Per.* 2). – 156, 80, *154, 163f., *173, 224, 229, 312, 317
Hemdrup stick, North Jutland (Moesgård mus. 1949. *Per.* 2). – 350, 150f., 155, 218, *352, *353, 357, 366
Herjolfsnes (Gudveg's stick), Greenland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1921. *Per.* 3). – 244
- (254 *Herlev stone*, Sjælland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1876). – Spurious)
- 175 *Hesselager censer*, Fyn (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1809. *Per.* 3). – 447
- 157 *Hillerslev tombstone*, North Jutland (high up in the west wall of the church tower. C. 1629. *Per.* 3). – 414
- 232 *Himlingeje bow fibula*, Sjælland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1835. *Per.* 1). – 122, *125
Himlingeje rosette fibula, Sjælland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1949. *Per.* 1). – 128, 122, *126
- 77 *Hjermind stone 1*, North Jutland (in the parson's garden. C. 1629. *Per.* 2). – þulfR : risþi : stin : þansi | iftiR : rapa : brupur : sin : harþa | kuþan : trik (Tholv erected this stone in memory of Rade, his brother, a very noble 'dreng'). – *288, *264, 269
- 78 † *Hjermind stone 2*, North Jutland (1643. *Per.* 2). – After Worm: tufa : risþi : stin | þansi : iftiR : t | usta : sun : sin : hib?a : truk (Tove erected this stone in memory of Toste, her son, a ??? 'dreng')
- 126 † *Hobro stone 1*, North Jutland (C. 1629, *Per.* 2). – After Skonvig: þar(s)tin : rasþi : stin : þansi : aftir : aukuta | ok : i?al : faþur : ?rt : kuþ?(ru)nar (rasþi = raisþi or risþi, aftir = aftiR, ok = auk. – Thorsten(?) erected this stone in memory of Øgote and ??? father ... (runes)). – 329
- 127 *Hobro stone 2*, North Jutland (Hobro mus. 1623. *Per.* 2). – 380, 378, *381
Hoby font, see Bräkne-Hoby font
- 353 *Holm tombstone* (gable stone), Halland (Hist.Mus.Sth. C. 1627. *Per.* 3). – 417
- 328 *Holmby stone*, Skåne (by the church. 1650. *Per.* 2). – 256, 219, *264, *272, *279
- 24 *Holsted corbel*, North Jutland (in the east gable of the church. 1885. *Per.* 3). – tuki (Toke, a man's name). – 422
- 231 *Holtug limestone ashlar*, Sjælland (in the south wall of the nave, outside. 1892. *Per.* 3). – 420
(Inside the tower is a *second ashlar* with runes from recent times)
- 16 *Hoptrup font*, South Jutland (in the church. 1900. *Per.* 3). – 450, *449

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- 34 *Horne stone*, North Jutland (Nørholm manor, in the park. C. 1629. *Per.* 2). – 228f., 246, 269
Hovslund stone, see Øster Løgum stone
- 176 *Hundstrup censer*, Fyn (Nat.Mus.Cop. C. 1750. *Per.* 3). – 448
- 161 *Hune stone*, North Jutland (in the ground storey of the church tower. C. 1629. *Per.* 2). – hufi þurkil þurbiurn₁ satu stin runulfs hins rap sbaka | | faþur sins (Hove, Thorkil (and) Thorbjørn placed the stone of Runulf the Quick-witted, their father). – 344
- 282-86 (†) *Hunnestad monument*, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. C. 1627. *Per.* 2). – 250 (nr 1-2), *251, *253 (nr 3), *258 (nr 3-5), *259, *261 (nr 1, 3), *263 (nr 3), 268, *272 (nr 3), *275 (nr 1-2), 282, 296 (nr 1-2, 4), 341 (nr 1)
- 150 *Hurup stone*, North Jutland (in the churchyard. 1910. *Per.* 2). – þurmuþr : r ... || ?? : þ(is) ... | : iftiR ... | kuþr : ... | pur : sin (Thormod erected (this stone) in memory of N.N., (but Thor(?))–god (made the monument in memory of) his father (or brother))
- 103 *Hvidbjerg stone*, North Jutland (by the church. 1852. *Per.* 3). – b(e)þei : for bo bo (or a bind-rune. – Pray for Bo, Bo)
Hviding carpenter's runes, South Jutland (in the roof construction of the church. 1953. *Per.* 3). – fuþ. – 440
- 264 *Hyby stone 1*, Skåne (in Vissmarlöv, outside the school. 1624. *Per.* 2). – 266, *260, *273, 297
- 265 † *Hyby stone 2*, Skåne (C. 1730. *Per.* 2). – : ranuifþi · huas · raisþi · stin þisi · ifti · þanfuf · (nu a bind-rune). – X erected this stone in memory of Y)
Hyrup carpenter's (woodcarver's) runes, South Jutland (in the church. 1901. *Per.* 3). – 440, 454
- 295-97 *Hällestad stones 1-3* Skåne (in the wall of the church. 1668. *Per.* 2). – 293 (nr 1), 294 (nr 2-3), 190, 191 (nr 1), 263 (nr 2), 268 (nr 2), 290 (nr 1), 291 (nr 2), 295, 304, 314, 342 (nr 2), 345
- 166 *Hæstrup church-bell*, North Jutland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1900. *Per.* 3). – 442, *443, 474
- 350 *Hästveda tombstone* (gable stone), Skåne (Hist.Mus.Lund. Before 1877. *Per.* 3). – 416, *415
- 250 *Høje Tåstrup stone*, Sjælland (by the church in Hedehusene. 1827. *Per.* 2). – 158, *165, 344
- 332 *Hör font*, Skåne (in the church. 1691. *Per.* 3). – + marten : mik : giarþe : + (Martin made me). – 450, 426, *451, 498
(*Hørdum picture stone*, North Jutland (in the church. 1954. *Per.* 2). – 252, *264, *275)
- 58 *Hørning stone*, North Jutland (Moesgård mus. 1849. *Per.* 2). – 316, 240, *272, *315
- 318 (†) *Håstad stone*, Skåne (Hist.Mus.Lund. C. 1743. *Per.* 2). – brant(r) [: karþi : kubl : þusi : ufti(R) : k]uba : faþur | sin : [auk : ifi : filaka : (i)ku]þa : (Brand made this monument in memory of Gubbe, his

father, together with Eve, Gubbe's partner). – 342, 345

- Ibsker plaster inscription*, Bornholm (in the upper storey of the church tower. 1964. *Per.* 3). – iakob (ob a bind-rune. – Jakob). – 432
- Idom willow stick*, North Jutland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1933. *Per.* 3). – Capital letters, rune-like characters, scrawl (Acta Ethnologica 1938, p. *137)
- 150 *Ikast sword-pommel*, North Jutland (Nat.Mus.Cop. C. 1900. *Per.* 3). – 474
- Illerup lance-heads 1-2*, North Jutland (Moesgård mus. 1980. *Per.* 1). – *95, 64, *96, *97
- Illerup mount for a shield-handle 1* (bronze), North Jutland (Moesgård mus. 1976. *Per.* 1). – *95
- Illerup mount for a shield-handle 2* (silver), North Jutland (Moesgård mus. 1983. *Per.* 1). – *98, *99, 64
- Illerup mount for a shield-handle 3* (silver), North Jutland (Moesgård mus. 1983. *Per.* 1). – *101
- Illerup plane*, North Jutland (Moesgård mus. 1981. *Per.* 1). – *88, 89, 64
- Ireland*, see Dublin antler, Dublin futharks
- 359 *Istaby stone*, Blekinge (Hist.Mus.Sth. 1748. *Per.* 1). – 142, 137, *145, 178
- 414 *Ivory relief 1* (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1931. *Per.* 3). – ieselus. – 456
- 415 *Ivory relief 2* (Deutsches Mus., Berlin. 1865. *Per.* 3). – 132, 456
- Jelling group*. – 201
- (*Jelling manikin*, North Jutland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1820. *Per.* 2). – 216, *217, 219)
- 41-42 *Jelling monument*, North Jutland (at Jelling. 1591. *Per.* 2). – *202, *185, *203, 210, 213, 238, 246
- 41 *Jelling stone 1*, North Jutland (in the churchyard. 1586. *Per.* 2). – 206, 164, 167, 172, 188, 190, 200, *204, 213, 268, *270, 341
- 42 *Jelling stone 2*, North Jutland (in the churchyard. 1586. *Per.* 2). – 207, 21, 164, 167, 170, 172, 188, 192, 200, *206, 208f., 211, 213, 218, 222, 231, 249, 257, *259, *261, 263, 268, *270, *272, 301, 322, 341, 352, 403, 498
- Jelling stone 3*, North Jutland (Jelling mus. 1964. *Per.* 2). – *221, 220
- 170 *Jerslev amulet stone*, North Jutland (Nat.Mus.Cop. C. 1900. *Per.* 3). – mbl(m)b | mbl
- 159 † *Jetsmark church-bell*, North Jutland (1638). – Probably not runes. – 444
- 160 *Jetsmark stone*, North Jutland (in the church porch. 1855. *Per.* 2). – 378, 313, *305
- Jordberga stone*, see Källstorp stone

- Kallerup stone*, see Høje Tåstrup stone
- 411 *Karlevi stone*, Öland (in the field west of Karlevi. 1634. *Per.* 2). – 320, 120, 246, *272, 285, 310, *321, 345
Klejtrup stone, North Jutland (north of Klejtrup lake. 1978. *Per.* 2). – 308, *307
Klemens, see Klemensker
- 399 *Klemensker stone 1*, Bornholm (in the churchyard. 1643. *Per.* 2?). – 338, 329, *340, *341
- 400 *Klemensker stone 2*, Bornholm (in the old churchyard at Allinge. 1643. *Per.* 2?). – 332, 240, 329
- 401 *Klemensker stone 3*, Bornholm (by the road south of the Brogård bridge. 1819. *Per.* 2?). – 310, *270, *309, 328f.
- 402 *Klemensker stone 4*, Bornholm (in the churchyard in Hasle. 1851. *Per.* 2?). – x aulakR x let x reisa x stein x pana x eftiR x sasur x fopur sin x bonta x kuþan x kuþ x hialbi x siol x hans x auk x sata x mihel x (Ølak had this stone erected in memory of Sasser, his father, an honourable land-owner. May God and Saint Michael help his soul). – *262, 240, *272
- 403 *Klemensker stone 5*, Bornholm (in the churchyard. 1856. *Per.* 2?). – 332, 240, 339
- 404 *Klemensker stone 6*, Bornholm (in the churchyard. 1881, 1889. *Per.* 2?). – 339, 254, *272
- 405 *Klemensker stone 7*, Bornholm (in the churchyard and in the tower. 1879, 1881. *Per.* 2?). – ... † rkibiskubs : ma?r † [:] hi? [:] ... ?r : h † ... (uncertain if † means a or æ... – ... archbishop's ...). – 339, *342
- 406 *Klemensker stone 8*, Bornholm (in the churchyard. 1882, 1883. *Per.* 2?). – x asur x auk x þai(R)... in x| x ... (Asser and ...). – *270
- 407 *Klemensker stone 9*, Bornholm (by the entrance to the churchyard. 1888. *Per.* 2?). – ... str : auk : ...
- 108 *Kolind stone*, North Jutland (in the church porch. 1868. *Per.* 2). – tusti ǥ risþi ǥ stin | þansi ǥ ift ǥ tufa ǥ is | uarp [:] tuþr : ustr : burþu | r ǥ sin ǥ smiþr ǥ ǥsuiþaR (Toste, Asved's smith (i.e. craftsmand), erected this stone in memory of Tue, his brother, who met his death in the east). – *270, 277, 312, 314
Kongevej stone, see Klemensker stone 2
Krageholm stones, see Sövestad stones
- 194 † *Kragehul horn*, Fyn (1761. *Per.* 1). – “two rows of small runic letters”. – 130
- 195 *Kragehul knife-haft*, Fyn (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1865. *Per.* 1). – 93, *92, 131
- (195a † *Kragehul knife-haft* (fragment), Fyn (1867). – Not runes)
- 196 *Kragehul spear-shaft*, Fyn (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1877. *Per.* 1). – 103, *101, 106f., 131, 134, 141, 177f., 243, 359, 494, 496
- 197 † *Kragehul wooden disk*, Fyn (1761. *Per.* 1). – “two rows of big runic letters”. – 71
- 73 *Kragelund tympanum*, North Jutland (in the south doorway of the

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- church. C. 1660, 1878. *Per.* 3). – 419, *423
- 177 *Kullerup censer*, Fyn (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1902. *Per.* 3). – 448
Kuregård stone, see Klemensker stone 5
- 354 *Kvibille tombstone*, Halland (in the south wall of the church. C. 1670. *Per.* 3). – : efi : auk : þu(rg)utr : þeR : lagþu : stin : ifi(r) : þorlak : kuþ : hialbi : sol : hans : (Eve and Thorgot, they laid the stone over Thorlak. God help his soul)
- 269 *Källstorp stone*, Skåne (Jordberga manor, in the park. C. 1870. *Per.* 2). – : þurkil : karþi : þurþaR : sun || bru : þisi : || aft : uraka : bruþur : | sin (Thorkil, son of Thord, made this brigde in memory of Vrage, his brother). – 406, 343
- 198 *Køng bronze figure*, Fyn (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1907. *Per.* 1). – 130, 94, *129
- 199 *Køng station of the Cross stone(?)*, Fyn (in the church 1926. *Per.* 3). – 454, *441
- 84 † *Langå stone 1*, North Jutland (C. 1629. *Per.* 2). – ... aftiR : || þurþ ... (in memory of Thord ...)
- 85 † *Langå stone 2*, North Jutland (C. 1629. *Per.* 2). – Reconstruction on the basis of Skonvig's drawing: huatr (or huakR) : risþi : stin : þansi : ift (of aift) | ... faþur : sin : auk : aift(?) : iarþ | ulf : | bruþur : sin : þuri : h[iu] (Hvat (or Hvak) erected this stone in memory of N.N., his father, and in memory of Jarpulv, his brother. Thore (?) (cut the runes, or the like))
- 86 *Langå stone 3*, North Jutland (by the church. 1861. *Per.* 2). – ... ?R ... | stin ... | ... (bruþur) : (s) | in : hrþa : kupan : | þigin ((X erected this) stone (in memory of Y), his (brother), a very noble 'thegn')
- 87 *Langå stone 4*, North Jutland (Randers mus. 1868. *Per.* 2). – tuki (Toke, a man's name)
- 88-89 † *Langå stones 5-6*, North Jutland (1868. *Per.* 2). – 5. ... up ... – 6. ... sin ...
- 105 *Laubjerg stone*, North Jutland (in the church porch. C. 1690. *Per.* 2). – 375, *376
- 79 † *Le stone*, North Jutland (C. 1629. *Per.* 2). – After Skonvig: ... tur ... r(e)sþu sta(i)n aft (þofta) ... | ... R?l(... erected the stone in memory of N.N.)
- 252 *Ledøje brick*, Sjælland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1888. *Per.* 3). – *439
Lem stone, North Jutland (in the church porch. 1957. *Per.* 2). – (þu) ... [risþi] s(tin) (pa)si ift (or aift or auft) : urik : buþur : sin : (Tho??? erected this stone in memory of Urik (or Vrig), his brother). – *281, 343
- 322 *Lilla Harrie font*, Skåne (in the church. 1833. *Per.* 3). – + marten : mik : giarþi : + (Martin made me). – 450, 498
- 323 † *Lilla Harrie stone*, Skåne (1740. *Per.* 2). – Reconstruction: aft | un(a)r i skal il stant(a) i l s? ... (In memory of Unnar it (or the stone) shall stand ...)

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- 267 *Lilla Isie comb*, Skåne (Hist.Mus.Sth. 1791. *Per.* 3). –
uhob(i)uknioiti(i). – 446
Lille Hedinge limestone ashlar, Sjælland (in the south doorway of the
church. 1976. *Per.* 3). – 422
- 418 *Lincoln comb-case*, England (British Mus. 1867. *Per.* 2/3). – 466,
*463
Lindholm knife-haft, North Jutland (Ålborg Mus. 1953. *Per.* 2). –
348, 155, *350, 365
- 261 *Lindholmen bone amulet*, Skåne (Hist.Mus.Lund. 1840. *Per.* 1). –
131, 106, 107, *130, 132, 134
- 362 † *Listerby rood-loft*, Blekinge (c. 1627. *Per.* 3). – 454, 474
- 412 *London stone*, England (Mus. of London. 1852. *Per.* 2). – 322, 36,
*259, *263, *271, *325, 345, 407
- 412a *London stone, City of*, England (British Mus. 1884. *Per.* 2). – ... ki :
...
Lousgård bronze "bead", Bornholm (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1955. *Per.* 1/2).
– 347, 161
Lund annals in Erfurt, see Erfordensis, Codex
- 300 *Lund bone 1*, Skåne (Hist.Mus.Lund. 1888. *Per.* 3). – 460, *457
- 301 *Lund bone 2*, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1910. *Per.* 3). – *31, *327,
370, *399, 458
- 302 *Lund bone 3*, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. C. 1920 *Per.* 3). – 460
- Add. 5 *Lund bone 4*, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1938. *Per.* 3). – 460, *457
Lund bone 5, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1945. *Per.* 3). – 460
Lund bone 6, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1954. *Per.* 2). – *399, 458
Lund bone 7, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1961. *Per.* 3). – 458, *399
Lund bone 8, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1969. *Per.* 3). – 460, *457
Lund bone 9, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1971. *Per.* 3). – 460
Lund bone 10, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1974. *Per.* 3). – 460, *399,
*457, 458
Lund bone 11, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1973. *Per.* 3). – 460
Lund bone 12, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1975. *Per.* 2). – 31, *399, 458
Lund bone 13, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1976. *Per.* 3?). – Confused.
Read right to left: klapkakkbpkbpk (rune 2 may be read as n). – *459
Lund bone 14, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1980. *Per.* 3). – 460, *459
Lund bone 15, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1980. *Per.* 3). – 461, *459
Lund bone 16, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1980. *Per.* 3?). – Irregular. –
*459, 460
Lund bone 17, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1980. *Per.* 3). – Confused.
Some rune-like characters. – *459, 460
Lund bone 18, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1980. *Per.* 3). – ftaen. – *459
Lund bone 19, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1980. *Per.* 2). – 462, *459
Lund bone 20, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1981. *Per.* 3?). – 461, *459
Lund bone 21, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1981. *Per.* 3). – 462, *459
Lund bone 22, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1981. *Per.* 2). – 463, *459

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- Lund bone 23*, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1981. *Per.* 2). – 462, *459
Lund bone 24, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1981. *Per.* 2). – 463, *459
Lund bone 25, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1981. *Per.* ??). – 462, *459
Lund bone 26, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1981. *Per.* 3). – 464, *459
Lund bone 27, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1981. *Per.* 2/3). – 466, *459
Lund bone 28, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 71839:468. 1983. *Per.* 3). – 16.8 cm, the runes l.5. Confused runes
Lund bone 29, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 71839:1012. 1983. *Per.* 3). – 12.5 cm, the runes c. l.3. Fragment in two bits. – ... utkl × t × t × t (sh) (uncertain if t = æ or a)
Lund bone 30, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 71839:1216. 1983. *Per.* 3). – C. 11 cm, the runes l.5. – fuþorkhniaslbn(y)
Lund bone 31, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 71839:1502. 1983. *Per.* 3). – 13.8 cm, the runes c. 2. – fuþorkh
Lund bone 32, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 71839:1524. 1983. *Per.* 3). – C. 15 cm, the runes c. 1. – fuþ (cf. p. 459).
Lund bone 32a, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 71839:1524. 1983. *Per.* 3). – Flat, irregular fragment c. 4.5 × 4.6 cm. – ... l(u)?
Lund bone 33, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 71839:1583. 1983. *Per.* 3). – C. 16 cm, the runes 0.5-0.8. – Side A: eighteen m-runes. Side B: fuþrmmmmmm
Lund bone 34, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 71839:1616. 1983. *Per.* 3). – 9.7 cm, the runes c. 1. – i × fup (cf. p. 459)
Lund brick, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1944. *Per.* 3). – 459, *399
(Lund Cathedral capital, Skåne (in the crypt. 1973). – Not runes. – 504)
- Add. 6 *Lund Cathedral double capital*, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1938. *Per.* 3). – 426, 458
- 312-13 *Lund Cathedral inscriptions 1-2*, Skåne (nr 1 in the crypt, nr 2 on the base of the western shaft on the north wall of the nave. 1643, 1667. *Post-medieval*). – By Adam van Dören c. 1500. – *501
- 303 *Lund comb 1*, Skåne (Hist.Mus.Lund. 1881. *Per.* 3). – 466, *461, 468
Lund comb 2, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1890. *Per.* 3). – 466
- 305 *Lund comb 3*, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1892. *Per.* 2). – 466, 373, *461
Lund comb 4, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1980. *Per.* 3). – 466, *463
- 307 *Lund glove-needle 1*, Skåne (Hist.Mus.Lund. 1881. *Per.* 3). – 468, 94, *465
- 308 *Lund glove-needle 2*, Skåne (Hist.Mus.Lund. 1892. *Per.* 3). – mæn(n)isi. – 468
Lund glove-needle 3, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1974. *Per.* 3). – 470, 461, *465, 468
Lund glove-needle 4, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1982. *Per.* 2/3). – 470, *465, 468
- 306 *Lund knife-haft*, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1900. *Per.* 3). – 466, *467

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- Lund leaden trial-piece of runic coin*, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. Before 1982. *Per.* 3). – *392
- Add. 7 *Lund leather scabbard 1*, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1937. *Per.* 3). – 475
Lund leather scabbard 2, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1979. *Per.* 3). – 475
Lund leather scabbard 3, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1980. *Per.* 3). – 475, *476, *477
- 308a † *Lund slate amulet*, Skåne (1920. *Per.* 3?). – After Wennström: –
 I † N † R † N † Þ † R † N †
- 309 *Lund slate 1*, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1927. *Per.* 3?). – ... himKr
 310 *Lund slate 2*, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1932. *Post-medieval?*). – ... m ...
 314 *Lund stone 1*, Skåne, (Univ. Library, Lund. 1682. *Per.* 2). – 255, 240, 251, 255, *258, *259, 270, *272, *276, 297
 315 *Lund stone 2*, Skåne (in the gateway of the bishop's house, Copenhagen. Before 1816. *Per.* 2). – 241, 417
Lund "tinblsein", Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1961. *Per.* 3). – 471, *469
Lund walking-stick, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1966. *Per.* 2). – ulfkil (a man's name). – 472, *473, 482
- 311 *Lund weaving-tablet*, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1906. *Per.* 2). – 358, 104, 134, 141, *359, 458, 494, 496
Lund wooden bowl, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1979. *Per.* 3). – olauus : me : pos(i) (ol and au bind-runes. – Latin: Olav owns me)
Lund wooden cup, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1964. *Per.* 3). – 474, *471
- 178 *Lunde censor*, Fyn (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1701. *Per.* 3). – : magis : tær : iakobus : ruffus : fabær : me fecit : (ak and ob bind-runes. – Latin: Master Jakob Red, smith, made me. – Cf. Fåborg censor)
Lundhøj stone, see Klemensker stone 1
Lundsgård finger-ring, see Revninge finger-ring
Lübeck knife-haft, North Germany (Lübeck mus. 1952. *Per.* 3). – paa : knif : gopæ(r) (På's good knife). – Not examined by the author
- 167 *Lyngby font*, North Jutland (in the church. 1935. *Per.* 3). – 450, *449
 140 *Lyngby stone*, North Jutland (in the church porch. 1769. *Per.* 2). – ... (n)untr : a : aisku : sina : (not deciphered)
Lyngsjö plaster inscription, Skåne (in the church tower, east wall. 1979. *Per.* 3). – 432, *433
- 26 *Læborg stone*, North Jutland (in the churchyard. 1638. *Per.* 2). – 228, 230, *247, 268, *272, 309, 314, 343
- 47 *Lønborg church-door hinge*, North Jutland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1872. *Per.* 3). – New reading after conservation: ... a · hin dyr | hæriskol · uiræg (or uiræg) sopæ · lat(u)mih | ... þitgærn(i)k (... on this door ...). – 442
- 367 *Lösen brick*, Blekinge (Hist.Mus.Sth. 1864. *Per.* 3). – 440, *439
 364 *Lösen tombstone 1*, Blekinge (in the churchyard. C. 1627. *Per.* 3). – odmar : ok · reinmod (a man's name and a woman's name. – Most of the runes end up with small vertical lines as on the Giv glass pane

and the Oddum stone)

- 365 † *Lösen tombstone* 2, Blekinge (c. 1627. *Per.* 3). – tuka · l(i)t · ri(s)a [ː]
st(e)ina [ː] ɣ̥... kuna · þan · goþa · gurþaR · arfa (Toke had (these)
stones erected (in memory of ???) gunne (?) the good, the heir of
Gyrd). – *262
- 366 (†) *Lösen tombstone* 3, Blekinge (in the churchyard. 1746. *Per.* 3). –
Mostly after Kling: [AnoþNIM | CCCX(I) asi ɗ (mi)l ɗ](t)g ʃræ
þen(æ) [s(t)ææn | (aa)e(i) ɗ ky | þusi]nau?f ʃp ʃ[irurkræiæeer] (In
the year of our Lord 1311 (or 1310) (N.N. had) this (stone made ...
and Father (or the father) ...). – 417, *416, 500

Marevad stone, see Klemensker stone 4

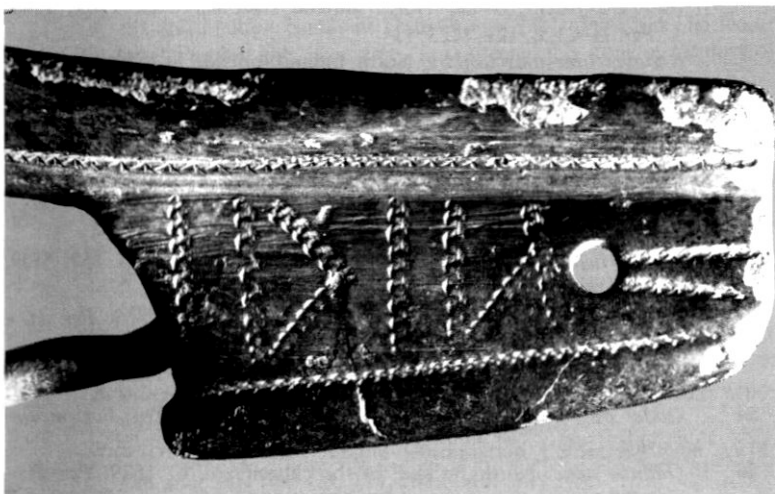
- 117 *Mejlby stone*, North Jutland (Randers mus. C. 1862. *Per.* 2). – ʔni :
riʃp : stin : þansi : aft : ʔ | skl : sun : sin : ias : tauþr | uarþ : maþ :
þuri : i : ura : | : suti : (Åne erected this stone in memory of Eskil, his
son, who met his death in the Øresund together with Thore (or on
Thore's raid). – *305, 312

Meldorf spring-case fibula, Dithmarschen (Schleswig-Holsteinisches
Landesmus., Schleswig. 1979. *Per.* I). – 24, 64, 121, *122, 131

Mosbjerg plaster inscription, North Jutland (on the triumph wall.
1964. *Per.* 3). – 430

Mollegård stone, see Åker stone 2

- 102 *Mønsted ashlar*, North Jutland (in the gable of the chancel. 1886.
Per. 3). – *424, *399
- 101 *Mønsted window lintel*, North Jutland (in the north wall of the
church tower. 1875. *Per.* 3). – 424, *399



Meldorf spring-case fibula, Dithmarschen, Schleswig-Holstein. See caption p. 122

- Måløv plaster inscription*, Sjælland (in the north wall of the nave. 1981. *Per.* 3). – Examined by Marie Stoklund. – *432, 448
- Narssaq stick*, Greenland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1953. *Per.* 2). – 153, 162
- 316 *Norra Nöbbelöv stone*, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1739. *Per.* 2). – : tufi : rispi : stin : pisi : iftR : umun : sin : fila ... (Tue erected this stone in memory of Umon, his companion ...). – 342
- † *Norra Åkarp inscription*, Skåne (1881. *Per.* 3). – Painted inscription of the triumph wall. – 438, *427
- 347 *Norra Åsum stone*, Skåne (in the church porch. 1598. *Per.* 3). – 404, *405, 407, 417
- 13 *Nydam arrows*, South Jutland (Gottorp Castle. 1859-63. *Per.* 1). – An arrow with the runes lua, others with rune-like characters (owner's marks?). – 102
- Nyker plaster inscription*, Bornholm (in the church tower, basement storey. 1959. *Per.* 3). – 432, *399
- 389 *Nyker stone*, Bornholm (in the church porch. 1842, 1859. *Per.* 2?). – 334, *262, *272
- 244 *Nykøbing brick*, Sjælland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1841. *Per.* 3). – *439
- Ny Lars*, see *Ny Larsker*
- 379 *Ny Larsker stone 1*, Bornholm (in the church porch. 1643. *Per.* 2?). – 334, 192, *262, *272, 312, *336
- 380 *Ny Larsker stone 2*, Bornholm (in the church porch. 1643. *Per.* 2?). – 336, 186, *272, 312, 334, *337
- 381 *Ny Larsker stone 3* (natural boulder), Bornholm (Rønne mus. 1880. *Per.* 3). – *ketilbarn* (a man's name)
- Næsbjerg rosette fibula*, North Jutland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1909, 1949. *Per.* 1). – 126, 121, *123, 131
- Nødager limestone ashlars*, North Jutland (outside in the west wall of the church. 1980. *Post-medieval*). – *morten anpersen blytcker*, *ras-mus*, *iacob nielsen rents*, *micel* (men's names, *blytcker* = plumber)
- 9 † *Nørre Brarup stone*, South Jutland (c. 1832. *Per.* 2). – 160, 151, *153, 164
- Nørre Løgum brick*, South Jutland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1960. *Per.* 3). – 440, *439
- 211 *Nørre Nærå stone*, Fyn (in the church. 1684. *Per.* 2). – 157, *159, 163, 164, 166ff., 172, 174, 215f., 248, 508
- Nøvling rosette fibula*, North Jutland (Ålborg mus. 1963. *Per.* 1). – 129, 89, 122, *124
- 54 *Odder dug-out canoe*, North Jutland (Odder mus. 1929. *Post-medieval*). – 502
- 46 *Oddum stone*, North Jutland (in the churchyard. C. 1629. *Per.* 3). – (Cf. Lösen tombstone 1). – 399, 344, *400
- 204 *Odense lead tablet*, Fyn (Odense mus. 1883. *Per.* 3). – 492, 117, *493

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- Odense loom weight*, Fyn (Odense mus. 1975. *Per.* 3). – þlunl(bk)i(i) + l (or u) nkþr(u)k(s)þ
- 179 *Ollerup censer*, Fyn (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1701. *Per.* 3). – + magistær : iakobus : me fecit : toke : kōptæ mik : mariia (Latin: Master Jakob made med. Danish: Toke bought me. Maria. – Cf. Fåborg censer)
- Ottestrup lead tablet*, Fyn (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1981, 1982, three fragments. *Per.* 3). – *491
- 38 *Pjedsted oak chest*, North Jutland (Nat.Mus.Cop. C. 1660. *Per.* 3). – (g)uNi | smiþ | garþ | mæk (ar a bind-rune. The dotted n-rune, transcribed N, indicates a dental n. – Gunne smith (i.e. craftsman) made me)
- 39 *Pjedsted stone* North Jutland (Nat.Mus.Cop. C. 1660. *Per.* 3). – † lai † ristæ † (Lai carved)
- 368 *Poulsker figure of Paulus* (keystone), Bornholm (in the chancel arch. 1857. *Per.* 3). – 419, 441, 444
- 369 † *Poulsker stone*, Bornholm (1893. *Per.* 2?). – ... (u)ein · lit · hak ... b?(u) · s ... (... Sven had cut ...)
- 40 *Randbøl stone*, North Jutland (Randbøl heath, original site. 1874. *Per.* 2). – 298, 192, 268, *296, 314
- 115 (†) *Randers stone 1*, North Jutland (Randers mus. 1623. *Per.* 2). – sbau(r) · r(i)sþi · stain · þ(a)si · u ... aba · sina · miuk · ... || r : hrþa : kupan : pign (Spor (or Spurv = 'sparrow') erected this stone in memory of ..., a very noble 'thegn'). – 343
- 116 *Randers stone 2*, North Jutland (Randers mus. 1910. *Per.* 2). – tuki : ri(s) [þi] | [s]tin : þansi : ift | þurstin : sin | [b]ruþur : nuk | igi : sin : faþu[r] (nuk = auk, igi = iga. – Toke erected this stone in memory of Thorsten, his brother, and Inge, his father)
- 136 *Ravnkilde brick*, North Jutland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1935. *Per.* 3). – 440, *439
- 134 *Ravnkilde stone 1*, North Jutland (by the church. 1859. *Per.* 2). – 378, 190, 309, 314, *379
- 135 *Ravnkilde stone 2*, North Jutland (in Kongens Tisted, in the east wall of the parson's garden. 1847. *Per.* 2). – × asgutr × tuguta × sun × risþi × stin : ift | isgi : bruþur : sin (Asgot, son of Tygote (or Dugunde), erected the stone in memory of Esge, his brother). – 344
- Ravsted carpenter's runes*, South Jutland (in the roof construction of the church. 1954. *Per.* 3). – fuþo. – 440
- 203 *Revninge finger-ring*, Fyn (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1821. *Per.* 3). – 102, *486, 487, 492
- Ribe cranium*, North Jutland (Antiquarian Collection, Ribe. 1973. *Per.* 2). – 347, 104, 151, 161, 163, *346, *349, 458
- Ribe healing-stick*, North Jutland (Antiquarian Collection, Ribe. 1955. *Per.* 3). – 493, 134, 152, 243, 351, 359, 361, 394, 428, 458,

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- 493, *495, 500
Ribe steelyard handle, North Jutland (Antiquarian Collection, Ribe. 1959. *Per.* 3). – 474, *467
- 114 *Rimsø stone*, North Jutland (in the churchyard, on a mound. 1814. *Per.* 2). – þuriR : brupiR : ainraþa | raisþi : stain : þānsi : | uft : muþur : sina : auk : ... ku ... ikam : tsrau : mas : iþua? ... (is in raisþi a bind-rune; the same bind-rune on Øster Alling stone, surely by the same rune-carver. – The last passage to be read back to front: [t]auþi sam uarst maki. – Thore, brother of Enråde, erected this stone in memory of his mother and ... death of a mother is the worst that can happen to a son). – 190, 133, *187, 220, 310, 342, 344, 486
- 246 *Roskilde bronze amulet*, Sjælland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1866. *Per.* 3). – 488, 480, *489
Roskilde Cathedral plaster inscriptions, Sjælland (inside the chancel screen, on the north side. 1980. *Per.* 3). – 432, *431
Roskilde St. Jørgensbjerg plaster inscription 1, Sjælland (on the west side of the north door. 1941. *Per.* 3). – auk(t) (or [s]ankt (saint))
Roskilde St. Jørgensbjerg plaster inscription 2, Sjælland (on the east side of the triumph wall, to the north. 1953. *Per.* 3). – Obliterated secret runes as on the Roskilde bronze amulet, plus: (uþ)ru(s)
- 247 *Roskilde uþu stick*, Sjælland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1898. *Per.* 3). – 490, 357, *489
- 171 † *Rudkøbing church-bell*, Langeland (1740. *Per.* 3). – “runic letters in latin language”, not copied. – 444
- 408 *Rutsker stone*, Bornholm (in the churchyard. 1877. *Per.* 2?). – ... r : let ... t : su ... uþ : halb ... auk : ku ... (N.N. had ... May (God) help ... and (God’s Mother))
Rydsgård stone, see Södra Villie stone
- 409 *Rø stone*, Bornholm (in the church. 1624. *Per.* 2?). – 319, *272, 310, 328, 383
- 382 *Rønne stone*, Bornholm (on Storegade in Rønne, opposite the public school. Before 1824. *Per.* 2?). – Obliterated
- 202 *Rønninge stone*, Fyn (in the church. C. 1627. *Per.* 2). – 314, 224, *313
- St Olof church plaster inscription*, Skåne (east pillar of the nave. 1975. *Per.* 3). – Not examined by the author. – 438
- 75 *Sale tombstone 1*, North Jutland (Moesgård Mus. 1836. *Per.* 3). – ?(a)rn(fo)lkus ... æ| ... * ... se ...
- 76 *Sale tombstone 2*, North Jutland (in the church. 1839. *Per.* 3). – 410, 402
Sallerup font, see Västra Sallerup font
- 227 † *Sandby stone 1*, Sjælland (1636. *Per.* 2). – ... ?k · ??n · sun · su(t)a : ... | ... aft : þurp : brupur ... (... son of Sote ... in memory of Thord, (his) brother ...)

- Sandby stone 2*, Sjælland (in the churchyard. 1643. *Per. 2*). – askl : sati : st ... | ... asi : at : tufa : | [b](ru)þr : s(in) : h ... ||¹in |¹kru ... (Eskil placed this stone (or these stones) in memory of Tue, his brother, ... and Krog(?) (carved the runes?))
- 229 *Sandby stone 3*, Sjælland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1643. *Per. 2*). – 388, 94, 345
- Scheelsminde buckle*, see Ålborg buckle
- 104 *Selde font*, North Jutland (in the church. 1861. *Per. 3*). – 451, *449
- 344 *Simris stone 1*, Skåne (in the south wall of the churchyard, facing outwards. 1716. *Per. 2*). – 265, *262, *281, 329, 343, 378
- 345 *Simris stone 2*, Skåne (in the west wall of the churchyard, facing inwards. 1716. *Per. 2*). – 265, 243, *262, *281, 284, 291, 341, 378
- 62 *Sjelle stone*, North Jutland (in the church porch. 1591. *Per. 2*). – : fraystain : sati : stain : þ(e)nsi : uft : | (g)yrþ : lags : m(a)n : sin : brupur : sig | ualta : ... | ... a : t(u)e(g)ia : (a) : ?u?s : eþi : (Frøsten placed this stone in memory of Gyrd, his ‘lagsman’ (= comrade or ‘huskarl’?), brother of Sigvalde, ... of Tvegge(?) on ??? heath (or isthmus)). – *258, 312
- (*Sjellebro picture stone*, North Jutland (in a field by Sjellebro. 1951. *Per. 2*). – 253, *258, 266
- 155 *Sjørind stone*, North Jutland (in the porch of Vang church. 1741. *Per. 2*). – 291, 172, *290, 308
- 279 *Sjörup stone*, Skåne (in a bridge over Skivarp river. C. 1627. *Per. 2*). – 294, 47, 192, *272, 329
- Sjöstorp stone*, see Dalby stone
- 263 *Skabersjö buckle*, Skåne (Hist.Mus.Lund. C. 1855. *Per. 2*). – *354, 486
- 141 *Skarp Salling antler handle*, North Jutland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1885. *Per. 3*). – um ·· stæf · ... i · (r)ieierz · hus · suii · uii || ... (ri · u)nls ·· (m)y (m)y
- Skellerup inscriptions*, North Jutland (on the north wall of the chancel, inside. 1960. *Per. 3*). – Cut directly into the limestone ashlar, several minuscule inscriptions (e.g. the sator-arepo formula), and above nikolaus (in runes) is carved hoc est fud (cf. Slesvig bone 3). – 430
- 80 *Sjern stone 1*, North Jutland (in the churchyard. 1830s. *Per. 2*). – ... usbiaur ... | ... | ... ur : si(n) | ... harals : h ... (... Osbjørn (or Husbjørn) ... his ... Harald’s ...). – 445
- 81 *Sjern stone 2*, North Jutland (in the churchyard. 1843. *Per. 2*). – 236, 140, 234, *235, 258, 293, 296, 341, 344
- 270 *Skivarp stone*, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. C. 1850. *Per. 2*). – : tumi : risþi : stia : þasni : iftiR : ??Ra : filaka : sia (stia = stin, þasni = þansi, sia = sin. – Tomme erected this stone in memory of ???, his partner)
- 133 *Skivum stone*, North Jutland (in the church porch. 1654. *Per. 2*). – 297, *293, 344

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- 213 *Skovlånge stone*, Lolland (Maribo mus. C. 1627. *Per.* 2). – : *ąstarþr* : *rasþi* : *stin* : *þasi* : | : *ąftiR* : *iuta* : *fapur* : | : *sin* : *harþa* : | : *kupan* : *þi* | *akn* : (Astred erected this stone in memory of Jyde, his father, a very noble ‘thegn’). – *270, 268, 344, 450
- 153 *Skyum font*, North Jutland (in the church. 1877. *Per.* 3). – + *kir* (Ger, a man’s name)
Skönebäck horn, Skåne (Hist.Mus.Lund. 1824. *Post-medieval*). – 502
- 351 † *Skåne stone*, Skåne (1716. *Per.* 2). – After Rönnou: *kalia ris(b)i* : *stin* : *þansi aftiR* : *aisi* : *bruþur* | *sia* (*kalia* = *kalin*, *sia* = *sin*). – Galen erected this stone in memory of Ese (Æse), his brother)
- 280 *Skårby stone 1*, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. C. 1627. *Per.* 2). – 257, 256, *260, *282, 297
- 281 *Skårby stone 2*, Skåne (in the wall of the churchyard. 1691. *Per.* 2). – × *autiR* × *sati* × *s(tai)n* × *þansi* × *aftiR* × *haku* | *n* × (Aute placed this stone in memory of Hakon). – 282
Slemminge hide-scraper, Lolland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1943, 1962. *Per.* 1). – *93, *92, 103
Slesvig bone 1, South Jutland (Gottorp Castle. 1972. *Per.* 3). – 478, *479
Slesvig bone 2, South Jutland (Gottorp Castle. 1972. *Per.* 3). – 478, *479
Slesvig bone 3, South Jutland (Gottorp Castle. 1973. *Per.* 3). – 478, *481
Slesvig bone 4, South Jutland (Gottorp Castle. 1974. *Per.* 3). – 479, *481
Slesvig bone 5, South Jutland (Gottorp Castle. 1974. *Per.* 3). – 479, *481, *399
Slesvig bone 6, South Jutland (Gottorp Castle. 1974. *Per.* 3). – 480, *481
Slesvig bone 7, South Jutland (Gottorp Castle. 1975. *Per.* 3). – 480, *479, *399
- 5 † *Slesvig church-door mount*, South Jutland (1597. *Per.* 3). – 442
Slesvig rune stick, South Jutland (Gottorp Castle. 1973. *Per.* 2/3). – 484, *483, 500
- 6 *Slesvig stone*, South Jutland (Gottorp Castle. 1897. *Per.* 2). – ... *l(i)t* : *ri(a)* : *stain* : *e* ... || ... ?*an* : *s(ul)* ... | ... [*t*](*a*)*upr* : ... | ... (*n*) : *auk* : *kupmunt* : *þaR* [: *r*] ... || [(*a*)*R*] : *a* *enklanti* : *skiu* [: *h*] *juilis* : *kr* ... (... had the stone erected in memory of ... (he) died ... N.N. and Gudmund, they (carved the runes). He rests at Skia in England ...). – When the stone was discovered, Richard Haupt saw remnants of red colour in the runes; cf. his *Betrachtungen über germanische Kunst*, *Architektonische Rundschau* 12, 1908, p. *100 (reference by Marie Stoklund). – 243, *263, 265, 312, 345, 378
Slesvig walking-stick, South Jutland (Gottorp Castle. 1975. *Per.* 2/3). – 480, 472, *483

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- 248 *Snoldelev stone*, Sjælland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1770s. *Per.* 2). – 158, 121, 163, 166, 179f., *183, 224, *272, 345, 361
- 275 *Solberga stone*, Skåne (Torsjö manor, the park. 1716. *Per.* 2). – brupiR : rispi : stin : þainsi : iftiR : isbiurn : br|uþur : sin : saR : uaR | skibari : uþ ... (Broder erected this stone in memory of Esbern (or Isbjørn), his brother; he was N.N.'s (or a good) 'skipari' (= one of a ship's crew)). – 343
- 119 *Spentrup stone 1*, North Jutland (in the church porch. 1884. *Per.* 2). – ... þasi : run ... | ki : lifa : (... may these runes ... live (long)). – *264
- 120 *Spentrup stone 2*, North Jutland (Randers mus. 1767, 1913. *Per.* 2). – askatla × rispi ... ls × sbika × sun × stin × þansi × (Askatle erected this stone (in memory of N.N.), son of Spege). – 231, *272
- Sporup stone*, North Jutland (in the church. 1966. *Per.* 2). – 265, *263, 269, *281, 344
- Staby ashlars*, North Jutland (in the north door of the church, partly covered by the frame. 1964. *Per.* 3). – 1. In the east jamb: nomina(s?) | f · þt : mna (perhaps nomina is the imperative mood of Latin nominare = name). – 2. In the west jamb: r(æ)isokna
- 17 *Starup stone*, South Jutland (in the churchyard. C. 1914. *Per.* 2). – *33, 40, 151, 165, 216, 375
- 118 (†) *Stenalt stone*, North Jutland (Stenalt manor. 1623, 1913. *Per.* 2). – Partially after Worm: [asur : st](u)fs : sun :|| [raispi : stjain : þansi | [auft : br](pu)r : sun : sin : (Asser, son of Stuf, erected this stone in memory of Broder, his son)
- Stenløse plaster inscription*, Sjælland (in the east gable of the nave. 1976. *Per.* 3). – bo (a man's name) plus confused runes. Not examined by the author
- Stenmagle wooden box*, Sjælland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1947. *Per.* 1). – 88, *87, 69, 98
- 180 *Stenstrup censer*, Fyn (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1701. *Per.* 3). – : mik : iækop rolut [gorte] (Jakob Red (made) me)
- 357 *Stentofte stone*, Blekinge (in the porch of Sölvesborg church. C. 1830. *Per.* 1). – 139, 94, 103, 137, *138, 141, 144, 147, *172, 224, 339
- Stoby plaster inscriptions*, Skåne (in the apse and the chancel. 1954. *Per.* 3). – Examined together with Marie Stoklund. – 434, 432, *435, 436, *437
- 215 *Stokkemärke reliquary*, Lolland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1835. *Per.* 3). – 446, *445, 500
- 324 *Stora Harrie stone*, Skåne (in the church. 1851 or 1861. *Per.* 2). – birla : sati : ... | ...) : iftiR · tuka | mak · sin ... (Birle (a man's or a woman's name) placed (this stone?) in memory of Toke, his (or her) 'måg' (= kinsman by marriage) ...). – *272
- 293 † *Stora Herrestad stone*, Skåne (1716. *Per.* 2). – 310, 279
- 339 *Stora Köpinge stone*, Skåne (in the churchyard. C. 1627. *Per.* 2). – :

- uristr : auk : nukR : auk : krusa : rispu : stin : þānsi : uft : aba : filaka : sin : trik : kupan : (Vrest and Nyk and Kruse erected this stone in memory of Ape (or Abbe or Ebbe), their partner, a noble 'dreng'). – 172, *270, 342, 344
- Store Hedinge limestone ashlar*, Sjælland (in the apse. 1981. *Per.* 3). – amen (and a romanesque lion's head). – 422
- 18 *Strårup diadem*, South Jutland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1840. *Per.* 1). – 107, *108
- 363 *Sturkö stone*, Blekinge (on the island of Sturkö. C. 1627. *Per.* 2). – 380, 378
- 138 *Suldrup stone 2*, North Jutland (by the church. 1895. *Per.* 2). – : riuskR : rispi : s(t) ... R : ufah : brupu | r : sin : (Rysk erected (this stone ... in memory of) Ufag, his brother). – 343f.
- 137 *Suldrup tombstone* (stone 1), North Jutland (in the church porch. 1880s. *Per.* 3). – 414, *411
- 186 *Svendborg knife*, Fyn (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1915. *Per.* 3). – 468, *467
- 272-73 † *Svenstorp stones 1-2*, Skåne (1854. *Per.* 2). – Concerning nr 1 only information about its cleavage exists. Nr 2 is known through a very defective drawing:
 □ | ↑ ↑ ↑ | ↑ ↑ R B | H ↑ | : H ↑ ↑ ↑ : | ↑ H | : ↑ ↑ ↑ : H ↑ | ↑ | ↑ : B R ↑ | R
 (... erected this stone in memory of ...)
- Svenstrup stone*, North Jutland (by the road to Kjellerup mansion. 1964. *Per.* 2). – 312, *311, 334
- 181 † *Svinninge censer*, Fyn (1702. *Per.* 3). – After Lucoppidan: *mæstær : iakobus ruffus me fecit aufe maria kra* (Danish: Master. Latin: Jakob Red made me. Hail mary, (full of grace)). – 447
- 49 *Sædding picture ashlar*, North Jutland (in the north wall of the nave, outside. 1654. *Per.* 3). – *425, 414
- 217 *Sædinge stone*, Lolland (Maribo mus. 1854. *Per.* 2). – 300, 231, *270, 278, *292, 388, 486
- Søborg bone*, Sjælland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1966. *Per.* 3). – *133
- 257 *Søborg brick*, Sjælland (in the southeastern pilaster-strip, 80 cm from the corner, 16th course. 1894. *Per.* 3). – 440
- 256 *Søborg coffin lid* (?), Sjælland (in the church porch. 1838. *Per.* 3). – 415
- Søborg lead tablet*, Sjælland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1982. *Per.* 3). – 492, 491
- 326 *Söderviddinge font*, Skåne (in the church. 1833. *Per.* 3). – + marten : mik : giarpe : + (Martin made me). – 450, 498
- 277 *Södra Villie stone*, Skåne (Rydsgård manor. 1845. *Per.* 2). – × kata × karpi × kuml × þausi × iftiR × suin × baluks | sun × bunta × sin × saR × uas × þiakna × furstr (Kade made this monument in memory of Sven, Ballung's son, her husband. He was the most prominent of the 'thegns'). – 286
- 356 *Sölvesborg stone*, Blekinge (by the church. 1748. *Per.* 1). – 160, 79, *157, 163f.

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- 148 *Søndbjerg plint stone*, North Jutland (in the wall of the church tower. 1909. *Per.* 3). – 419, *423
- 240-43 *Sønder Asmindrup plaster inscriptions*, Sjælland (in the north wall of the chancel. 1910. *Per.* 3). – 1. toki · rist [·] a??uk [·] þa · ulsmisu · tah (Toke carved ??? on the mass day of Olav (= 29 July)). – 2. toki | tok | silf : at lani · af · ræhnldu (ok in tok a bind-rune. – Toke took silver as a loan from Rægnild). – 3. ata(ra). – 4. aræhgs (ar a bind-rune). – 430, 398
- 191 *Sønderby stone*, Fyn (Jægerspris Castle. 1809. *Per.* 1/2). – 156, *159
- 220 *Sønder Kirkeby stone*, Falster (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1802. *Per.* 2). – 230, 34, 228, *233, 236, 243, *264, 269, 312, 345
- 36 (†) *Sønder Vilstrup stone*, North Jutland (in the churchyard. 1638/39, 1910. *Per.* 2). – 203
- 82 *Sønder Vinge stone 1*, North Jutland (Ulstrup manor. C. 1629. *Per.* 2). – ... [r](a)i(sp)i | ... si ǥ ift | skibara ǥ sin(a) [ǥ] þ(i)r(i) | ǥ auk ǥ tuft(a ǥ) (N.N. erected (this stone, or the like) in memory of his ‘skiparar’ (acc.pl. skipara), Thire and Tue. – On ‘skipari’, cf. Solberga stone). – 234, 236, 343
- 83 *Sønder Vinge stone 2*, North Jutland (in the church porch. 1866. *Per.* 2). – 232, *233, 506
- 55 *Sønder Vissing stone 1*, North Jutland (in the church. 1836. *Per.* 2). – 203, 188, 195, *198, 202, 243, 256, *270, 280, 308, 345, 378, 380f.
- 56 *Sønder Vissing stone 2*, North Jutland (in the church porch. 1836. *Per.* 2). – : tuki : karpi : kumbl : þisi : iaft : | : aba : fapur : sin : | : uhimskan : hal : (Toke made this monument in memory of Ape (or Abbe or Ebbe), his father, a wise man). – *270
- 187 *Sørup stone*, Fyn (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1701, 1809. *Per.* 3). – 257, *260, *272, 319
Søstrup plaster inscription, Sjælland (in the north wall of the chancel. 1975. *Per.* 3?). – 430, *431
- (290) *Sövestad stone 1* (picture stone), Skåne (Krageholm manor, the park. 1756. *Per.* 2). – 266, *261, *272, *286)
- 291 *Sövestad stone 2*, Skåne (Krageholm manor, the park. 1757. *Per.* 2). – 298, *263, *295, 341, 345
- 292 † *Sövestad stone 3*, Skåne (mentioned 1855)
- 212 *Tillitse stone*, Lolland (by the church. C. 1627. *Per.* 2). – 388, 386, 94, 172, 192, *272, 302, 329, *384, *385, *387
- 216 *Tirsted stone*, Lolland (Nat.Mus.Cop. C. 1627. *Per.* 2). – 299, 231, 266, 269, *270, *301, 312, 388, 403
- 156 *Tisted tombstone*, North Jutland (in the south wall of the church tower. 1769. *Per.* 3). – + þorh | amdis | son | huiler | hæra | (on and le bind-runes. – Thord, son of Amdi, rests here)
Tjæreby plaster inscriptions, Sjælland (in the north wall of the chancel. 1960. *Per.* 3). – 432

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- 182 *Tjøme censer*, Norway (Oldsaksamlingen, Oslo. 1804. *Per.* 3). – makistær : iakobus : m ruffus (:) fa ... fecit ugb (tær a bind-rune. – Latin: Master Jakob Red, smith, made me. Danish: God). – 447, 398, 428
- 169 *Tornby plaster inscriptions*, North Jutland (in the north wall of the chancel. 1908. *Per.* 3). – 430
- 8 *Torsbjerg shield-boss*, South Jutland (Gottorp Castle. 1858-61. *Per.* 1). – 98, *100, 102, 135
- 7 *Torsbjerg sword-chape*, South Jutland (Gottorp Castle. 1858-61. *Per.* 1). – 99, *74, 101, 135
- Torsjö stone*, see Solberga stone
- 90 † *Torup stone M* (Middelsom district), North Jutland (c. 1629. *Per.* 2). – After Skonvig: (a)sgutr : uipa : sun : kims : mantr|suins : rispi : stin : þ ... (a)ft(t) : brup[r] ... (Skonvig's kimsmantr probably an error for kinsmantr/kunsmantr. – Asgot, son of Vide, kinsman of Sven, erected (this) stone in memory of Broder ...). – 310, 392
- 154 † *Torup stone T* (Ty), North Jutland (c. 1629. *Per.* 2). – After Skonvig: (a)sa : sati : stin : þansi : aftiR : tuku????iR : ?a : ?ir : sin : kupan : |is uarp : uikin : (a) : aufu : hiþi : | : [a]uk : ua : s : him(p)iþi (:) | saga : iutis (Åse placed this stone in memory of ... her good ... who was killed on 'aufu' heath and was a 'huskarl' of Saka-Juter). – 292, 290, 308, 312
- Towel-horse from 1605*, Fyn (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1907. Dated 1605). – 502
- 349 † *Trolle-Ljungby brick*, Skåne (1767 *Per.* 3). – Confused drawing
- 230 *Tryggevalde stone*, Sjælland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1597. *Per.* 2). – 226, 192, 224, *229, 248, 297, 308, 313f., 344
- 271 *Tullstorp stone*, Skåne (in the churchyard. 1624. *Per.* 2). – 250, 224, 232, 248, *249, 252, *259, *264, 296
- 249 † *Tune stone*, Sjælland (c. 1773. *Per.* 2). – 158, *152
- 245 *Tømmerup silver cup*, Sjælland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1876. *Per.* 3). – 472, *471, 223, *399
- 218 *Tågerup stone*, Lolland (by the church. 1868 *Per.* 2). – : austains : suniR : | : raisþu : stain |þansi : | : aft : | : sbarlu : brupur : sin : | : skibara : asbiarnaR : | : nafs : (Sons of Østen erected this stone in memory of Sperle, their brother, 'skipari' (= one of a ship's crew) of Esbern Neb). – 314, 344
- 236 *Tårnborg slate stone*, Sjælland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1882. *Per.* 3). – kltiæ(n)tn ... | ... (m)
- 235 *Tårnborg stone*, Sjælland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1874. *Per.* 2/3). – (ku)þ ... fori : si | ?brit : sial (·) han : garþi st(ina) | ... (k)ipuin : bu(r)? : (an and ar bind-runes. – God ... take care of the soul of ???bret; he made ... Edwin (or Gedwin) ...). – 406

- 183 *Ulbølle censer*, Fyn (Nat.Mus.Cop. C. 1660. *Per.* 3). – 448, *446, *447, 456

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- Ulstrup stone*, see *Sønder Vinge stone 1*
- 266 *Uppåkra stone*, Skåne (on Stenshöggård. 1624. *Per.* 2). – nafni × risþi × stin × þasi | aftiR × tuka × brupur × si[n]|| han × uarp × uistr | tuþr (Nayne erected this stone in memory of Toke, his brother. He met his death in the west). – 312
- 317 *Valkärra stone*, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. C. 1627. *Per.* 2). – · tufa : risþi : stina : þisi : uftiR : kamal : buta : sin : uk : asur : | : sun : hs (Tove erected these stones in memory of Gamal, her husband, and Asser, his son (i.e. Tove ... jointly with Asser, son of Gamal)). – 342
- 337 *Valleberga stone*, Skåne (Kult.Mus.Lund. 1856. *Per.* 2). – *238, 215, 219, 240f., *272, 312, 380, 393
- 27 (†) *Vamdrup tombstone 1*, North Jutland (Koldinghus Castle. 1643, 1939. *Per.* 3). – agnus (d)æi (ag a bind-rune. – Latin: lamb of God)
- 28 † *Vamdrup tombstone 2*, North Jutland (1638. *Per.* 3). – After Worm: ?ææ : likær þr : kiæ?æbbissun (Here lies Th???, Ebbe's son)
- 352 *Vapnö stone*, Halland (Vapnö mansion. 1868. *Per.* 2?). – ... raistu : stin : æft ... | ... (st)r : hialmbi : saul : h 1 ... ((X and Y) erected the stone in memory of N.N. (Christ) help his (or Ho???'s) soul)
- Vedelspang stone 1*, see *Haddeby stone 2*
- Vedelspang stone 2*, see *Haddeby stone 4*
- 57 *Vedslet amulet stone*, North Jutland (Moesgård mus. 1866. *Per.* 3). – þmkrhli | iklmrþh | A?hþa (groups of runes in interchanged order). – 488
- 139 *Veggerby window lintel*, North Jutland (Års mus. 1933. *Per.* 3). – kst
- Vejby bricks 1-3*, North Jutland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1956. *Per.* 3). – *379, *439
- 74 *Vejerslev tombstone*, North Jutland (by the church. 1769. *Per.* 3). – *408
- 69 *Vejlby stone H* (Hasle district), North Jutland (Moesgård mus. C. 1650. *Per.* 2). – þupkil · risþi : stn þansi : uftiR : tufa : mak : sin (Thydkil erected this stone in memory of Tue, his 'måg' (= kinsman by marriage))
- 113 ?† *Vejlby stone S.H.* (Sønder Hald district), North Jutland (1623). – Doubtful characters
- 43 *Vejlby Stone Age axe*, North Jutland (in Wimmer's Collection, Royal Library, Cop. 1892. *Per.* 3). – 488, *490
- 158 *Vesløs tombstone*, North Jutland (in the church porch, upside down. 1881. *Per.* 3). – niklas (Nicholas)
- 214 *Vesterborg renaissance tombstone*, Lolland (in the church. 1879. *Post-medieval*). – anteRi(g)
- 383 *Vester Marie stone 1*, Bornholm (in the churchyard. 1819. *Per.* 2?). – ... m : brup(i)m : ... (a)im : raist[u] · kumbl · þitsi · (a)? ... | ... (u)k · afterR · as?l · brupur · sin · guþ · hi ... (the carver once or twice mixed up A R and Y m. – (X), Broder (and Y) erected this monu-

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- ment (in memory of) ... and in memory of (Eskil), their brother. May God (help their souls)). – 216
- 384 *Vester Marie stone 2*, Bornholm (in the churchyard. 1847. *Per.* 2?). – 338, *333, 340
- 385 *Vester Marie stone 3*, Bornholm (in the churchyard. 1875. *Per.* 2?). – kilinR : r(e)isti ... (u)þur : sin : kup : hiabi : s(i)ol : has : (Gilling erected (this stone in memory of N.N.), his (brother). May God help his soul)
- 386 *Vester Marie stone 4*, Bornholm (in the churchyard. 1883, 1888. *Per.* 3?). – Reconstruction: suain ... (a)uk : tul(i) : auk : uifriþr : þau : lika : un??R : þi ... (st)ain (Sven?) ... and Tole and Vifrid, they lie under (this stone, or the like))
- 387 *Vester Marie stone 5*, Bornholm (in the churchyard. 1884. *Per.* 2?). – 332, *262, 311f., 329, 334, *335
- 388 *Vester Marie stone 6*, Bornholm (in the churchyard. 1888. *Per.* 2?). – Illegible. – *292
- 124 *Vester Tørslev stone*, North Jutland (in the church porch. 1870. *Per.* 2). – | hala | rispi | stin | | | þansi | litu | sun | | ift | aslf | brupur | sin | ('hala', son of 'lita' (gen. litu), erected this stone in memory of Asulv (or Aslev), his brother). – 344, *272, 345
- 92 *Vester Velling tombstone*, North Jutland (in the south wall of the church tower. 1838. *Per.* 3). – 410, *411
- Vesttorp comb*, see Lilla þie comb
- 100b *Viborg buckle*, North Jutland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1894. *Per.* 2). – 358, *357
- Viborg plinth stone*, North Jutland (Viborg mus. 1972. *Per.* 3). – 422, *421
- 100a † *Viborg "Virgula erotica"*, North Jutland (1632. *Per.* 3). – (Tracing in British Mus.). – 490, *489
- Vibæk mill*, South Jutland (in a beam under the crown wheel. 1956. Dated 1756). – 503
- 208 *Vimose buckle*, Fyn (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1851, 1868. *Per.* 1). – 92, *90, *91, 100, 243
- 207 *Vimose comb*, Fyn (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1865. *Per.* 1). – *90, 91, 178
- 206 *Vimose plane*, Fyn (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1865. *Per.* 1). – 89, *87, 94, 129
- (207a *Vimose sheath-mount*, Fyn (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1853). – Not runes. – 146)
- 205 *Vimose sword-chape*, Fyn (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1901. *Per.* 1). – *100
- 110 *Virring stone*, North Jutland (in the church porch. C. 1865. *Per.* 2). – 230, 215, 228, *233, 236, 343
- 142 *Vitskøl plinth stone*, North Jutland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1895. *Per.* 3). – 422
- Voldtofte stone*, see Flemløse stone 2
- 221 *Vordingborg stone*, Sjælland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1626. *Per.* 2). – 318, *319

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- 164 † *Vrejlev stone*, North Jutland (c. 1629. *Per.* 2). – After Skonvig: ... iu
stainiifak · faapum · (e)iniRl(o)i(a)
- 348 *Vä bronze mount*, Skåne (Hist.Mus.Lund. 1935. *Per.* 2). – 373, *372
Vä plaster inscription, Skåne (in the east wall of the chancel. 1965.
Per. 3). – Examined together with Marie Stoklund. – 432, *433
Vårlose rosette fibula, Sjælland (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1944. *Per.* 1). – 123,
122, *126
- 321 *Västra Karaby stone*, Skåne (by the road Landskrona-Lund, Ålstorp.
C. 1740. *Per.* 2). – : hals : auk : frebiurn : risþu : st || ina : þesi : eftiR
: | hufa : felaga : | sin : (Hals and Frøbjørn erected these stones in
memory of Hove, their partner). – 334
- 278 *Västra Nöbbelöv stone*, Skåne (by the entrance to the parsonage,
Nöbbelöv, in two parts. 1745. *Per.* 2). – : tuki : risþi : stin : þainsi :
iftiR : auþka : bruþur : sin : harþa : kuþan : ... (Toke erected this
stone in memory of Ødge, his brother, a very noble ('thegn'))
- 327 *Västra Sallerup font*, Skåne (in the new church. C. 1650. *Per.* 3). – +
marten : mik : giarþe + (Martin made me). – 450, 498
- 334-35 *Västra Strö monument*, Skåne (on Tul's barrow, the original site.
1624. *Per.* 2). – 255, *258, *261, *277, *278, 296, 312

Winchester stone, England (Winchester mus. 1970. *Per.* 2). – 322, 36,
284, *323

- 149 † *Ydby stone*, North Jutland (1738. *Per.* 2). – Reconstruction based on
Opitz and Abildgaard: þurkisl · sati · au(k) [·] || suniR [·] || lifa · i · staþ
· þansi · || stin : uftiR · lifa (Thorgisl placed, and the sons of Leve, at
this site the stone in memory of Leve)

Add. 3 *Æbelholt bone (love)amulet*, Sjælland (Æbelholt monastery mus.
1938. *Per.* 3). – *490

Add. 2 *Æbelholt brick*, Sjælland (Æbelholt monastery mus. 1938. *Per.* 3). –
*399

Add. 4 *Æbelholt lead amulet*, Sjælland (Æbelholt monastery mus. 1938. *Per.*
3). – ... im | ... onho | ... nmhm(l)o | ... hil(c)h || noro ... | hlpoh ... |
horþ(l) ... (ml a bind-rune). – 490

Ærø stone, Ærø (in Skovby. 1968. *Per.* 3). – pæ

Ølgod stone, North Jutland (Ølgod mus. 1975. *Per.* 3?). – Some few
runes

128 † *Øls stone*, North Jutland (1769. *Per.* 2?). – After Abildgaard: fuþruf :
þa : ko? · anal

59 *Øm brick 1* (stone 1), North Jutland (Øm monastery mus. 1921. *Per.*
3). – 440, *439

60 *Øm brick 2* (stone 2), North Jutland (Øm monastery mus. 1921. *Per.*
3). – ... ?æ(s)i

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- Add. 1 *Øm brick 4* (stone 4), North Jutland (Øm monastery mus. 1939. *Per.* 3). – *439, *399
- 61 *Øm stone 3* (sandstone), North Jutland (Øm monastery mus. 1921). – Probably not runes
- 188 † *Ørbæk stone*, Fyn (c. 1800. *Per.* 2). – 160, 164
- 333 *Ørja stone*, Skåne (Hist.Mus.Lund. 1867. *Per.* 2). – 159, *165
- 276 *Örsjö stone*, Skåne (in the garden of Örsjögård. 1716. *Per.* 2). – : tumi : rispi : stin : þaisi : iftiR : hunuiþ : bruþur : sin : harþa : kuþan : trik : (Tomme erected this stone in memory of Hunved, his brother, a very noble 'drengr')
- 200 *Ørsted picture ashlar*, Fyn (in the south wall of the nave, outside. 1897. *Per.* 3). – 420, 79, *271, *425
- 320 *Örtofta font*, Skåne (in the church. 1754. *Per.* 3). – + marten : mik : gearpe + (Martin made me). – 450, 498
- 162 *Ørum font*, North Jutland (in the church. 1932. *Per.* 3). – 450, *449
- 106 † *Ørum stone*, North Jutland (1831. *Per.* 2). – Reconstruction: au(i)tR : auk : (b)u?? : auk : tula (or tuli) : | auk : (þur)kiR : ia(l)us : karþu : | kubl : þusi : aft : k(ruk) (or kuik) : | ... sun | harþa : kuþan : þikn : (Ønd?) and B??? (or Th???) and Tole and Thorger(?) ??? made this monument in memory of Krok (or Kvig or Kvik), N.N.'s son, a very noble 'thegn')
- 109 *Øster Alling stone*, North Jutland (in the church porch. 1623. *Per.* 2). – (Cf. Rimsø stone, surely by the same rune-carver). – 313
- 163 *Øster Brønderslev door-jamb*, North Jutland (Nat.Mus.Cop. C. 1629. *Per.* 3). – 419, *418
- Øster Lars*, see *Øster Larsker*
- 397 *Øster Larsker stone 1*, Bornholm (by the church. 1643. *Per.* ??). – 318, *272
- 398 *Øster Larsker stone 2*, Bornholm (in the church porch. 1921. *Per.* ??). – broþir : auk : eimotr : þeir : litu : reisa : stein : þana : eft||ir : sikmut : faþur : sin : || kristr : hialbi : sialu : hans : auk : sata : mikel : auk : sata : maria : (Broder and Emund had this stone erected in memory of Sigmund, their father. May Christ and Saint Michael and Saint Mary help his soul). – *270
- Øster Larsker stone 3*, Bornholm (lintel in the north doorway of the church. 1955. *Per.* ??). – *343
- 15 *Øster Løgum stone*, South Jutland (original site, by the old Ox or Army Road, c. 3 km south of Immervad bridge (transferred back from Dreilinden Castle, Germany, in 1951). 1592. *Per.* 2). – *149, 151, 169, 375
- 396 *Øster Marie alphabet stone*, Bornholm (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1882. *Post-medieval*). – *399
- 390 *Øster Marie stone 1*, Bornholm (in Svaneke churchyard. 1624. *Per.* ??). – *327
- 391 *Øster Marie stone 2*, Bornholm (at the ruins of the old church. 1624.

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- Per. 2?*). – barni · auk · sibi · auk | [t]ofi · þeiR · reistu · sd | ei(n) [-]
(e)ftiR · ke(ti)l · faþu | r sin · (k)ristr [-] (h)lbi · hns | siol · (Barne and
Sibbe and Tue, they erected the stone in memory of Ketil, their
father. May Christ help his soul). – 345
- 392 *Øster Marie stone 3, Bornholm* (at the ruins of the old church. 1624.
Per. 2?). – (b)ar(n)i · auk · tofi · ok · askutr · letu · resa · sten · eftiR ·
siba · (b)roþ | or · sin · krist · sil · ial(b)i (Barne and Tue and Asgot
had the stone erected in memory of Sibbe, their brother. May Christ
help his soul). – *272, 278, 328, 337
- 393 *Øster Marie stone 4, Bornholm* (by the road near the Brohuse bridge.
1866. *Per. 2?*). – 329, *330, 339
- 394 *Øster Marie stone 5, Bornholm* (at the ruins of the old church. 1877.
Per. 2?). – auþi · auk · suin auk auþkiR · ristu stin eftirkunulf ruþur
isiin : kuþa · auk · iftiR kunilt · muþur (ruþur = bruþur, isiin = sin,
kuþa = kuþan. – Øde and Sven and Ødger erected the stone in
memory of Gunulv the Good, their brother (or their good brother)
and in memory of Gunild, their mother). – *272, 318
- 395 *Øster Marie stone 6, Bornholm* (at the ruins of the old church. 1890.
Per. 2?). – x kuþmt : nkuski : auk x hla : osu x airbni : kuþi : guþ :
msmiht : ionþpn x | + † ✕ † : | + itki ... ik(i) | ku · i ... | nik (The in-
scription is puzzling. There may be two ‘erectors’. The name of the
dead man is probably hidden in airbni, which is followed by an in-
vocation to God and Saint Michael. The three tokens after the cross
are the last golden numbers, cf. Bårse font). – 319, *272, 318, 411,
414, 452
- 93 *Øster Velling stone, North Jutland* (Nat.Mus.Cop. 1875. *Per. 2*). – ...
R : þurku ... | ... (ti)rik : (... Thorg ...)
- 343 *Östra Herrestad stone, Skåne* (in the churchyard. 1880s. *Per. 2*). – 267f.,
*270, 279
- 341 † *Östa Hoby stone 2, Skåne* (1848). – Confused drawing
- 340 † *Östra Hoby tombstone* (stone 1), Skåne (1624. *Per. 3*). – 416
- 342 *Östra Ingelstad plaster inscription, Skåne* (in the north wall of the
chancel. C. 1920. *Per. 3*). – gyla (a woman’s name)
- 346 † *Östra Sönnarslöv church door, Skåne* (1833. *Per. 3*). – ... kr ... an sin
auft ... kuþ. – 442
- 268 *Östra Vemmenhög stone, Skåne* (in a field belonging to Dybäck
manor, by the “Herremandsbro”, the original site. 1591. *Per. 2*). –
bruþiR : rasþi : stin : þaisi : aiftiR : busa : bruþur : sin : harþa :
kuþan : trik (Broder erected this stone in memory of Bose (or Bøse),
his brother, a very noble ‘dreng’)
- Östra Vemmerlöv plaster inscriptions, Skåne* (north doorway in the
church. 1975. *Per. 3*). – krist. – kri?. – bi. – Information from Sveri-
ges runverk

Åhus plaster inscriptions, Skåne (in the westernmost pillar of the

- nave. 1952. *Per.* 3). – Examined together with Marie Stoklund. – 438, 432, *437
- 373 *Åker font*, Bornholm (in Åkirkeby church. 1671. *Per.* 3). – (Panel 1) þita : iR : saNti gabrel : ok : sehþi : saNta mari(a) : at han sku (panel 2) Ldi : barn : (f)ypa : þita : iR : elizabeþ : ok : maria : ok : hailsas (panel 3) : hiar : huilis : maria sum : han : barn : fydi : skapera : himiz : ok : iorþaR : sum os : leysti (panel 4) þita : iRu : þaiR : þriR : kunuGaR : (s)um : (f)y(r)sti : giarþu : ofr : u (panel 5) arum : drotNi : hiar : tok : (h)aN : (uip)r : (kunuG)a : o(f)ri : uar drotiN (panel 6) hiar : riþu : þaiR : burt : þriR : kunuGaR : (panel 7) siþan þaiR : ofra(t) : [ha]fa : (o)rum : drotNi (panel 8) þaiR : þet : hi(a)[r] : fram : s ... (u) : (io)þaR : toku (panel 9) uarn : drotin : ok ... (N) : uip[rt]re : ok : (g)etu (panel 10) siþan : ladu : (þa)iR : haN : burt : þiaþa(n) : buNdiN (panel 11) ok : Nehldu : hiar : ioþaR : iesus : a krus : si : fram : a þita | sihra(f)R : (m)e??e?(i) : (This is Saint Gabriel who told Saint Mary that she should give birth to a child. – These are Elizabeth and Mary who greet each other. – Here lies Mary when she bore her child, the creator of heaven and earth, who redeemed us. – These are the Three Kings who first made offerings to Our Lord. – Here he, Our Lord, accepted the offerings of the Kings. – Here they rode away, the Three Kings, after they had made offerings to Our Lord. – They ... the Jews took Our Lord and bound(?) him to a tree and placed him under guard. – Then they led him away bound – and here the Jews nailed Jesus to the cross. Look ahead to (or straight at) this! Master(?) Sigra(f) (made the font). – 452, 448, *453, 470
- 370 *Åker stone 1*, Bornholm (in the porch of Åkirkeby church. 1624. *Per.* 2?). – þurfastr : auk : þurils : auk : bufi : þiR : satu : kuml : þusi : aftiR : ... f : auk : buruþR : kuþ : habi : qta : þisa : auk : kus : muþR : sartr : rist : ret (Thorfast and Thorgisl and Bove, they placed this monument in memory of ???f and Broder (i.e. Thorfast etc. ... jointly with Broder). May God and God's Mother help his soul! Sart carved right-ly)
- 371 *Åker stone 2*, Bornholm (in the porch of Åkirkeby church. 1643. *Per.* 2?). – kuþmund : auk : f(ru)biorn : resdu : stein : eiftR : isbiorn : faþur : sin : | kuþ : hialbi : siolu : hans : (Gudmund and Frøbjørn erected the stone in memory of Isbjørn (or Esbern), their father. May God help his soul)
- 372 (†) *Åker stone 3*, Bornholm (by the highway c. 100 m southeast of Åkirkeby. 1624. *Per.* 2?). – Reconstruction: þurst(e)[in · let · hka | efetR · su ...] koþr · | þign [·] (Thorsten, a noble 'thegn', had (the stone cut in memory of Sven(?)). – 334
- 33 *Ål ashlar*, North Jutland (in the south wall of the chancel, outside. 1885. *Per.* 3). – 422, *424
Ålborg bone, North Jutland (Ålborg mus. 1976. *Per.* 3). – mþur | mui
Ålborg buckle, North Jutland (Ålborg mus. 1964. *Per.* 2). – 347, 160,

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- 163, *167, *348, 358
Ålborg glove-needle, North Jutland (Ålborg mus. 1974. *Per.* 3). – 470, 94, *465, 468
- 210 † *Ålebæk stone*, Fyn (1623. *Per.* 3?). – After Skonvig: ... buru aftir au?ka (... bridge in memory of X). – 406
- Ålstorp stone*, see Västra Karaby stone
- 94 *Ålum stone 1*, North Jutland (in the church porch. 1843. *Per.* 2). – tuli : (ri)s[þ](i) : stin : þasi : aft | ika : t : sun : sin : miuk (:)(k)(u) ... k : þau : mun(u) | mini : m?(r)gt : iuf [:] þirta : (Tole erected this stone in memory of Ingiald, his son, a very noble 'dreng'. This memorial will long shine (?), þirta perhaps a mistake for birta = shine)). – 192
- 95 *Ålum stone 2*, North Jutland (in the church porch. 1843. *Per.* 2). – Fragments with some few runes
- 96 *Ålum stone 3*, North Jutland (by the church. 1890. *Per.* 2). – : uikutr : risþi : stin : þansi : iftiR : aski : sun : sin : kuþ : hialbi : hans : silu : uil (Vigot erected this stone in memory of Esge, his son. May God help his soul well). – 240, 187, 190, *241, *260, *261, 270
- 97 *Ålum stone 4*, North Jutland (by the church. 1902. *Per.* 2). – *187, 190, *241, 308, 345
- Århus comb*, North Jutland (Moesgård mus. 1964. *Per.* 2). – 361, *359, 461
- 63 *Århus stone 1*, North Jutland (Moesgård mus. C. 1650. *Per.* 2). – ... R : þigsla : ... | ... n : þansi : i ... | ... R : amuta : ... | ... s : ua?[?] : ?u ... | ... t (or l) : hipabu ... (N.N. (with the surname) Thexle (= a kind of axe) ... this (stone) ... (in memory of) Åmunde ... (he met his death at) Hedeby ...). – 197, 172, 344
- (64 *Århus stone 2* i DaRun is identical with Århus stone nr 1 in the same book)
- 65 *Århus stone 2* (DaRun nr 3), North Jutland (Moesgård mus. 1847. *Per.* 2). – ... × askaiR : biar ... | ǰ s(t)a(i)maR | þ(a)... (... Esger Bjar?? ... these stones(?) ...)
- 66 *Århus stone 3* (DaRun nr 4), North Jutland (Moesgård mus. 1850. *Per.* 2). – 220, 224, *247, 253, *258, *261, 312, 345
- 67 *Århus stone 4* (DaRun nr 5), North Jutland (Moesgård mus. 1866. *Per.* 2). – kitil : risþi : stin : þansi : uftiR : ika : faþur : sin (Ketil erected this stone in memory of Inge, his father)
- 68 *Århus stone 5* (DaRun nr 6), North Jutland (Moesgård mus. 1905. *Per.* 2). – [?]justi × auk × hufi × auk × þiR × frebiurn × risþu × stin × þansi × efteR × | × qsur × saksa × filaka × sin × harþa × || kuþan × trik × saR × tu × | × mana × mest × uniþikR × | saR × ati × skib × miþ × arnā + (the m-rune in mana and mest has the form Ψ. – Toste(?) and Hove jointly with Frøbjørn erected this stone in memory of Asser Saxe, their partner, a very noble 'dreng'. He died as the greatest 'undastard' among men; he owned a ship together with Arne). – *21, *35, 192, *270, 325

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- 131 *Ars stone*, North Jutland (in the churchyard. 1654. *Per.* 2). – 314,
192, 270, 278, *305
- 361 *Åryd alphabet stone*, Blekinge (in the ‘sacrificial grove’ by Halahult.
1747. *Per.* 3). – *399
- 22-23 *Åstrup ashlars*, North Jutland (in the north wall of the chancel, out-
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Dr Erik Moltke is the one man who could be trusted to write *the* book on "Runes and Their Origin. Denmark and Elsewhere". In 1942 he and Lis Jacobsen published the standard edition of Danish inscriptions, and under his leadership the Runological Section of the National Museum of Denmark became a world centre for the scientific study of runology. In this new book the many finds of the last 40 years – some of them no less than epochmaking – are added to the corpus known in 1942, and the discussion of the inscriptions themselves is introduced by an authoritative contribution on the origin and development of runes, firmly based on principles of alphabet history. Dr Moltke's long experience as chief editor of the National Museum's great series of volumes on Denmark's churches also makes him outstandingly well qualified to illuminate the significance of the runes seen against the background of Danish culture and religion in its different phases.

